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World War II

The Condor Legion

Mussolini Rescue
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World War II

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COVER: Hurried into action, the U.S. amphibious assault of the Tarawa atoll was the opening gun in the American campaign to roll back Japanese forces in the Central Pacific. Detail from the painting *Tarawa—20 November 1943* by Colonel Charles Waterhouse, USMCR. ABOVE: Artist Tom Lovell's painting *Tarawa* depicts the long walk in chest-deep water that awaited many of the U.S. Marines landing at Betio Island, its strategic wooden pier visible to right (Story, Page 16).

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An earth-shaking chain of events for a veteran of the field artillery — and many millions more.

The weather in Washington on that historic day was "gray and gloomy," Margaret Truman later was to recall. Her father, a U.S. Senator in 1941, was out of town, staying at a hotel in distant Columbia, Mo.

As the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor struck and outraged the American nation, the President in place was Franklin D. Roosevelt. He would be the Commander in Chief who was there for the beginning of the war, but fate had decreed that another would be in place to finish the war. As of December 7, 1941—just 45 years ago—that was an eventuality few Americans had on their mind.

Harry S. Truman, once a field artillery officer anxious to "re-up."

For Harry S. Truman and for many similarly scattered members of Congress, one immediate and galvanizing thought that Sunday was to return to Washington.

Out in the Pennant Hotel in Columbia, Missouri, Dad put on his clothes and raced across the road to a private airport, where he begged the owner to get him to St. Louis as fast as possible. They flew in a small plane, and he arrived just in time to catch a night flight to Washington. It was quite a trip. Every time the plane landed, another congressman or senator got on. Ordinary citizens were ruthlessly ejected, and pretty soon the plane was a congressional special.

As daughter Margaret also notes in her biography, *Harry S. Truman*, the assembled Senators and House members jointly heard Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech, then retired to declare war on Japan.

For the next three years, Truman remained a U.S. Senator. Apparently, though, he would rather have been more directly involved in the war effort as a field artillery officer. In 1940, he asked Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall to allow him to go on active duty (WW I artillery veteran Truman was still an Army Reserve colonel).

General Marshall pulled down his spectacles, eyed my gray-haired father, and said, "Senator, how old are you?"

"Well," said Dad lamely, "I'm fifty-six."

"You're too damned old. You'd better stay home and work in the Senate."

Truman did, and when a failing FDR prepared in 1944 to run for an unprecedented fourth term as President, the burning question became that of a vice presidential running mate. Not me, said Truman as the choices narrowed. But, in a tumultuous Democratic National Convention held in Chicago, Truman finally agreed, then beat out New Dealer Henry Wallace for the nomination.

In the November elections that followed, FDR was re-elected and Truman was elected Vice President. *While other Democrats—including his daughter—celebrated on that election night in 1944, Vice President-elect Harry S. Truman lay awake in Kansas City, worrying.*

No constant companion of the strangely reclusive President, the worried Truman nonetheless had seen what few outside of the immediate White House circle knew that autumn. Truman had unburdened himself to an old friend from southwest Missouri, Harry Easley. *"He told me that the last time that he saw Mr. Roosevelt he had the pallor of death on his face and he* [Truman] *knew that he would be President before the term was out."*

And so it was. Roosevelt died in April of 1945—Harry Truman thus would be the man, the President, called upon to finish the war as Commander in Chief. By the time of FDR's death, the tide of course was running strong for the Allies. The Normandy invasion was history; Hitler's own days were numbered, and in the Pacific the forces were gathering for final, all-out assault upon the Japanese home islands.

Still, many decisions were left to the new Truman White House. Among them would be the decision to use the newly developed atomic bomb against Japan, in place of a far more costly (to both sides) invasion of a fiercely defended homeland.

How would that epochal decision (and others) have turned out if George Marshall had said yes to the reserve colonel of field artillery? If Truman still had refused to seek nomination as FDR's running-mate? If Henry Wallace or someone else (any one of several dark horses) had won the nomination?

But none of these things happened. As it turned out, Truman finished out the war as President, and it was he who made its probably most momentous single decision, an emotion-charged subject of debate ever since. "It was not an easy decision to make," Truman later said. "I did not like the weapon. But I had no qualms if in the long run millions of lives could be saved."

Whatever the what-ifs or the direction of the moral debate, it's worth a note—the earth-shaking chain of events that began on a gray and gloomy Sunday 45 years ago.

C.B.K.

World War II

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Otto Skorzeny was determined to rescue Mussolini despite the incredible obstacles.

By Blaine Taylor

With war raging around the world, it was a quiet Sunday in Berlin as an obscure, 35-year-old *Waffen* (Armed) SS officer sat down to lunch with an old friend from Vienna at the Hotel Eden. Just three months earlier, Otto Skorzeny had been promoted to captain and named chief of the equally obscure German *Jagverbände*, or Special Troops, an embryonic unit with no combat experience. Not much had happened since, so far as the tall, scar-faced Austrian was concerned—a lull that was about to change drastically.

When Skorzeny interrupted coffee to check in at the office, he discovered his subordinates had been trying to locate him for hours. He was to fly at once to Adolf Hitler's Wolf's Lair headquarters; an airplane was standing by at Berlin's Templehof Airdrome for scheduled departure at 5 p.m., and he had best be on it. He was—as its sole passenger. Airborne, he settled back in his seat and wondered what the sudden summons was all about.

The plane touched down at Rangsdorf airfield, and Skorzeny was driven to the mysterious *Wolfsschanze* (Wolf's Lair), Hitler's headquarters in faraway East Prussia. It was a sizeable log-hut village, protected by tall trees with camouflage netting, antiaircraft guns, concrete bunkers, and SS troops.

Skorzeny was ushered into the encampment's tea house, where five other, more senior special unit officers from both the German Army and the *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) were making awkward, confused small talk. A brusque barking command from Hitler's own SS adjutant, Otto Günsche, interrupted them: "Gentlemen, you will now enter the Führer's presence!" All of the officers were completely astonished, none more so than Skorzeny.

The five other officers saluted Hitler; Skorzeny bowed. Sweating nervously in line, they all gave brief accounts of their individual military careers to date. Finally, Hitler stepped back and asked, "Which of you knows Italy—and what do you think of the Italians?" Each of the men lauded their loyal Axis ally, except for Skorzeny. He startled them all by saying: "What a question, *mein Führer*! Leader, I am an Austrian!"

The *Führer* had been known to make snap decisions and rather inexplicable personnel appointments in the past, such as that of Von Ribbentrop, a former champagne salesman, to head the Foreign Ministry (a bad choice) or the junior General Erwin Rommel to head up the *Afrika Korps* (an excellent decision). Now he made another one, based on his famous intuition. Like Skorzeny, he shared a low opinion of the Italians (but not of their leader, the *Duce*). Like Skorzeny, too, he had hated giving up the Alto Adige area of Austria to Italy for political reasons. Now, he looked at Skorzeny's blue eyes, duelling scars and massive frame and decided in a flash that here was his man to change the course of World War II in a single stroke.

A German paratrooper with slung machine gun stands before one of the gliders that Otto Skorzeny used to effect his mountaintop rescue of Mussolini.

He dismissed the other officers that Sunday — July 26, 1943 — and proceeded to brief Skorzeny on a fantastic, almost undreamed-of first mission for the green commander of Germany's just-formed Special Troops.

He had a mission of "the highest importance." Mussolini, his friend and comrade-in-arms, had been "betrayed" and arrested by his own countrymen. "Italy under the new government will desert us. I will keep faith with my old ally and dear friend: he must be rescued promptly, or he will be handed over to the Allies." Skorzeny would save Mussolini.

Thunderstruck, Skorzeny listened silently to the rules for what was to be Operation *EICHE*. He and his men were to be placed under the command of a *Luftwaffe* General Kurt Student, founder and commander of the famed *Fallschirmjäger* (parachute troops). Only three other officers would know of the plan.

Hitler exhorted further, "It's up to you to find out where the *Duce* is! You will avoid no risk. You will succeed, and your success will have a tremendous effect on the course of the war!"

Hitler's closing words rang in Skorzeny's ears as he left: "Bring me my friend Mussolini!"

Skorzeny first called Friedenthal, his own headquarters outside Berlin, to initiate his second-in-command, Karl Radl, into the mission plans, and ordered 50 *Kommandos* with full combat gear to be readied for immediate travel. The next evening, Skorzeny and Student dined in Frascati, Italy, at Field Marshal Kesselring's field headquarters for the Southern Italian Theater. (Hitler had placed a total of 11 divisions on a war footing there against his now-unreliable Italian ally.)

Continued on page 56

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The man behind history's largest combat air force held dim view of his own British Army's generalship.

By Raymond Callahan

Royal Air Force — for most people, those words conjure up Spitfires and Hurricanes, piloted by dashing young men in carefully casual flying garb, holding the skies over England during the legendary summer of 1940. And what RAF names do most of us remember? Again, they are likely to be from 1940—like "Stuffy" Dowding, who commanded the Few, or the remarkable Douglas Bader, whose two artificial legs did not prevent his becoming a fighter ace.

The Royal Air Force, however, fought a six-year global war and produced a number of remarkable figures who have somehow been overshadowed by "Spitfire summer." Arthur Tedder was one. It took an historical accident to make this slight, quiet, almost professorial pipe-smoker a warrior; another accident would eventually give his career its decisive twist.

The scholarly-looking Arthur Tedder ran the air war in Europe as Dwight D. Eisenhower's deputy supreme commander in the preparations for the Normandy invasion.

Tedder, the son of a senior civil servant, "read" history as an undergraduate at Cambridge and was bound for Britain's colonial administration—without World War I, he might well have ended as the be-plumed governor of some romantically remote colony. Instead he resigned from the colonial service, made his way back from his post in the Fiji Islands, joined the army, and by 1916 was serving with the Royal Flying Corps in France. He survived the hectic, vivid early days of combat flying (and in the intervals published a book—on 17th-century naval warfare!)

After the war he made a career in the new RAF, specializing in training and materiel matters. On the eve of World War II, he was named to the newly-created post of director general of research and development. (Tedder, with a university degree, was unusual among RAF officers of his seniority—a reflection of Britain's very different educational system.) Caught up in the RAF's rapid expansion, which became positively frantic with the arrival in May 1940 of Lord Beaverbrook as minister of aircraft production, Tedder could easily have spent most of the war in staff and production jobs. In November 1940, however, the RAF commander in the Middle East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore, asked for Tedder as his deputy. Winston Churchill promptly intervened. Told (probably by Beaverbrook) that Tedder was useful on the production end, the Prime Minister ruled that he was a man for "nuts and bolts" jobs and should stay in England. Air Vice Marshal Owen Boyd, whose recent experience had been with the barrage balloons of the quaintly named Balloon Command, was sent instead. Unfortunately for Boyd, a navigational error brought his plane down for a refuelling stop in what was supposed to have been Malta but was in fact the Axis bastion of Sicily. Tedder then went to the Middle East—and one of the RAF's most important wartime careers was underway (although, perhaps because fate had thwarted Churchill's wishes, Tedder would never be a favorite of the Prime Minister).

Only in the Middle East was the British Army facing Axis troops. After Sir Richard O'Connor's spectacular victory over the ill-equipped and poorly-led Italians in December 1940 had brought the Germans to North Africa, Britain was doing so with indifferent success. Tedder had an unflattering opinion of the quality of British generalship, although he made an exception for Sir Claude Auchinleck (an assessment with which many later historians would concur). But, first as Longmore's deputy and then, from June 1941, as Air Officer Commanding Middle East in his own right, Tedder built up the structure of army-air cooperation that would be a model for Allied practice for the duration of the war.

The RAF had paid little attention to army-air cooperation before 1939, placing its faith instead in the heavy bomber (one RAF squadron commander was officially rebuked for running a tactical exercise with an army brigade). Tedder realized that what he had to do in the Middle East was to run a tactical air force (while, of course, guarding RAF independence). Together with Arthur Coningham (confusingly known as "Mary," an elision of the New Zealander's original

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The war's half track was more an evolutionary step than a critical addition to the battlefield.

By Alexander S. Cochran, Jr.

One of the U.S. Army's most widely used vehicles during World War II was the Carrier, personnel, half track, M3A1, without armament, which ferried thousands of American doughboys into combat in Africa, Europe and the Pacific. It was a vehicle whose potential was largely unrecognized during World War I and whose development was limited during the interwar period. After the outbreak of World War II, it was widely produced. But its employment during the war proved only marginally successful. A year before the end of the war, its production ceased, and it was eliminated from active inventory. Yet it was one of the most important combat vehicles of the war in terms of future equipment and doctrine.

The Fury of the Half Track *might well be the title of this painting by A. Brockie Stevenson. The half track developed and used in World War II was more an evolutionary step, however, than a final stop as a mobile infantry carrier for the U.S. Army. The painting's real title is* Half Track.

Not surprising, the development of the World War II half track was directly linked to that of the tank. From ancient times, military commanders had sought ways to carry their infantry forces into battle in a protected vehicle. Prior to the 20th century, however, efforts to combine mobility and protection were limited by a paradox: the more protection, the less mobility. The development of the internal combustion engine dramatically changed that problem. With the double potential of lighter armor and enhanced mobility came the development of a new series of armored vehicles—and that of the World War II half track.

The British were first to introduce armored vehicles powered by internal combustion engines with the tank, an effort to break the bloody stalemate of World War I trench warfare. Their original notion was to take massive, mobile and protected firepower as far forward as possible. In reality, the new creatures of the battlefield were only marginally effective. Weighing more than eight tons, they moved at poor—crawling—speed and proved mechanically unreliable. Thus, while they possessed massive firepower, they were not so very mobile. And when employed without infantry support, they were defenseless. As one early tanker later wrote, "Every soldier who entered a tank to go into an attack knew that this was his probable form of death." Astute military observers realized that exploitation of the internal combustion engine still hinged on their ability to solve the mobility and protection aspects. The tank only provided a partial answer. The complete solution included an equally mobile and protected infantry force, with the key a combined-arms team.

After the Armistice of 1918, European military developers turned their minds to the effective employment of the combined-arms team, for which an essential element would be the design and production of a family of armored vehicles that included one for protected and mobile infantry. As they quickly recognized, the key to mobility came from the track upon which the vehicle moved. As George Patton later recorded, "tracks released an army from its bondage to roads." Track had enabled massive firepower to be employed with tanks. What was now needed was track for the accompanying infantrymen.

The developers turned to the chassis developed for the farming tractor. During the war immediately past, the British had used American-made armored tractors made by Holt Caterpiller (later the Caterpiller Tractor Company) to move artillery pieces. These vehicles had a single forward wheel and two tracks in the rear, somewhat like a modern road smoother. In contrast, the first tanks really were nothing more than two massive tracks with a mounted gun. Now the French decided to try this total track system for a protected infantry carrier. They developed a vehicle capable of carrying several infantrymen and propelled by a system of continuous rubber bands mounted on multiwheel bogies that a Russian designer had suggested in pre-war Russia. By 1921, they had built what became the first "half tracked" vehicle. It was a tractor with two rear tracks, but it also had two front wheels. Built by Citroen-Kegresse with a 10-horsepower engine, it successfully carried infantrymen in the snow of the Alps and the sands of the Sahara.

The British, on the other hand, elected to ignore the advantage of tracks, opting instead to test wheeled armored vehicles for the movement of protected infantry. Their logic was one of weight. Since rubber tires weighed less than rubber tracks and were more reliable, they reasoned that they could achieve more armament and greater carrying capacity. During the 1920s and 1930s, they developed a

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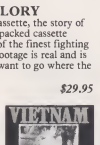

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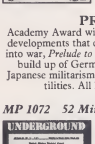

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series of six-wheeled armored cars built by Lanchester Motor Company, Rolls Royce and Vickers Armstrong, Ltd. These "combat cars" were little more than car chassis with an additional axle to accommodate armor protection and additional passengers.

While the Europeans developed their protected infantry carriers, the Americans sat idly by. Their problem was the simple fact that the development of armored vehicles—tanks or infantry carriers—was very expensive. The American Congress had proved itself not willing to allocate the necessary funds. As the Americans had built few tanks during World War I, moreover, the U.S. Tank Corps was left with few for training after the war. A momentary answer was provided by the French and British when they turned over many of their machines to the Americans. These antiquated beasts thus formed the nucleus of the new American Tank Corps, but only as an illusionary solution. Since the Europeans had had no infantry carriers, the Americans now had none either. To complicate the problem, Congress in 1922 specifically ruled out development of "special auxilary vehicles for tank service."

Congress had dealt another heavy blow with its National Defense Act of 1920, which abolished the Tank Corps and assigned its units and personnel to the infantry. Thus, future development of both armor doctrine and equipment lay in the hands of the Chief of Infantry. For a brief moment, young and innovative infantrymen, such as Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, envisioned a new tank-infantry doctrine, with implied need for an infantry carrier having the same mobility and protection as new tanks. However, the doctrinal implications of equating tanks and infantry did not sit well with the staid Chiefs of Infantry.

While the development of armored vehicles was retarded in the United States, it proceeded at a fast pace in Europe. Unburdened by the monsters they had unloaded on the Americans, European designers soon developed and fielded new and more efficient tanks. Their testing validated the doctrine of combined arms, while also confirming the requisite for protected and mobile infantry. Likewise, the doctrinal notion that tanks could not fight alone was recognized, a development that only heightened the requirement for wheeled and tracked vehicles to transport and protect accompanying infantrymen.

Fortunately for the U.S. Army, such innovation did not go totally unnoticed on the American side of the Atlantic Ocean. In 1927, Army Chief of Staff Charles P. Summerall issued a short directive, "Organize a mechanized force." Several years later, Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur directed the Army to "adopt mechanization and motorization as far as practicable and possible." While both directives were intended to force integration of the truck into the Army, they also had implications concerning armored vehicles. Initially at Fort Eustis and then at Fort Knox, the Army cautiously organized and tested an armored and mechanized force. Infantry units were assigned, though they still moved by foot or in trucks. Also assigned were cavalry elements with a reconnaissance mission. Cavalrymen were, by nature, independent, as represented by George Patton. Unlike his colleague Eisenhower, Patton had refused to be muzzled by the Chief of Infantry. Cavalrymen were first to look beyond mechanization — thus abandoning the horse—and then to tanks. Patton and other former members of the Tank Corps now in the cavalry realized the potential of the tank but also appreciated the need for

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In action against German-Italian positions in Tunisia after U.S. forces invaded North Africa in 1942 is a T-19 half track (left) serving as carriage for a 105mm howitzer.

mobile and protected infantry. They now looked around for a vehicle that would give their infantry the same mobility and protection as a tank.

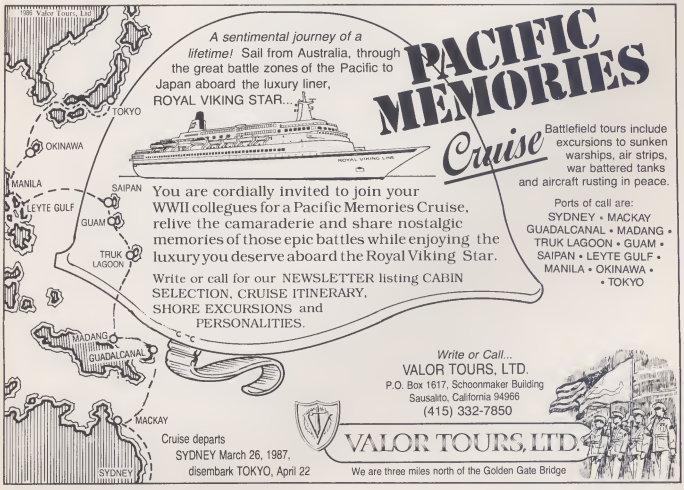
Coincidentally, the Army in the 1930s had made limited attempts to create combat cars (as had the British), developing what became known as the T series of combat cars. Like the British vehicles, these were armored cars—Pontiac, La Salle, Chevrolet, Plymouth, and Cadillac chassis with armored plating. Though they lacked the cross-country mobility, the combat car was all that was available as an infantry carrier for the cavalrymen.

For the Army, the issue still was the lack of funds for tanks or infantry carriers. In 1931, the Army had purchased one Citroen-Kegresse "half track" from the French. After it was modified, successive models were tested as T1 through T9, all increasing protection and load-carrying capability. By 1937, the result was standardized as Truck, Half Track, M2, produced by Marmon-Herrington. This was the first American "half track." It was a standard Ford V 8, 1½ ton, 4x2 truck with a front-drive axle and a rear track. As it had no armament, it still was not what the combined-arms team needed.

The birth of the World War II half track actually came in 1938 with the mating of the M2 Combat Car and the T13 Scout Car. Initially, the composite was designated as T7 and then the Car, Half Track, M2, a ten-seat armored personnel carrier. In 1939, it was further modified to meet artillery requirements and then standardized as the Carrier, Personnel, Half Tracked, M3. By late 1940, American Car and Foundry Company began the production of 2,500 such vehicles.

The M3 Half Track of World War II fame was a clumsy-looking box, some

Continued on page 66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By V. Keith Fleming, Jr.

Major General Julian C. Smith was not pleased. His command, the 2nd Marine Division, which had been refitting and training in New Zealand since leaving Guadalcanal early in 1943, had been chosen for the first operation in a new American drive against Japan in the Central Pacific. Now, in October 1943, he faced an operational concept he did not like. In addition, he and his staff had precious little time to develop a workable operation order for seizing a small, obscure island named Betio, one of several such islands comprising the triangular-shaped Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands.

Planning for the operation, codenamed GALVANIC, had been rushed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, after consultation and agreement with America's British allies, had given approval to an island-hopping Central Pacific drive only in late July 1943. The decision was something of a victory for the U.S. Navy, which saw the Central Pacific as the quickest route to Japan. General Douglas MacArthur had pushed for emphasis on the alternate path that would lead through New Guinea and the Philippines.

Tarawa was a logical target to planners in 1943. Situated about 2,500 miles southwest of Pearl Harbor and 1,300 miles southeast of Truk, Tarawa was intermediate between Japanese bases in the Carolines and Marshalls and the Allied-occupied islands which protected the lifeline between the United States and Australia. Occupation of Tarawa's airfield would halve the distance American planes would have to fly on missions over the Marshalls, the next objective. After that would come the Marianas, which would put American bombers within striking range of Japan herself.

The Japanese also recognized the importance of Tarawa, part of an outer ring of bases defending their recent conquests. They were in the midst of hurriedly, but thoroughly building up Betio's defenses.

The Japanese garrison for the Gilberts, commanded by Rear Admiral Keiji Shibasaki, was composed of the 3rd Special Base Force, headquartered on Betio. His combat troops, numbering 2,619 on Tarawa, were members of the Special Naval Landing Forces. These were naval infantry, often inaccurately referred to as Japanese Marines. There were also 1,247 laborers of the 111th Construction Unit and 970 more in a detachment from the 4th Fleet Construction Department. The latter units were not trained for combat, and most of the laborers were Koreans with no interest in fighting for the nation occupying their country. Shibasaki also commanded smaller garrisons on two other atolls, Makin and Apamama.

Tarawa was a typical Central Pacific atoll, about 22 miles long, with a necklace of small, low islands on the reef fringing its lagoon. Betio sat in a lower (southwest) corner of the triangular atoll, not far from the mile-wide gap forming an entry to the lagoon.

Betio, as *Time* magazine correspondent Robert Sherrod first noted, resembles a bird lying on its left side. The legs, represented by a long wooden pier, pointed north into the lagoon. The bird rests in the center of the reef; shallow water stretches 600 to 1,100 yards from the island's shoreline. Betio measures only about 2.5 miles from head to tail, and approximately 600 yards at its widest point.

Admiral Shibasaki planned his defenses well. The reef itself was a natural obstacle. Mines and man-made obstacles, ranging from concrete tetrahedrons to double-apron, barbed-wire fences, would delay and channelize the enemy into his weapons' killing zones. The defensive bunkers were well-engineered—constructed of concrete, steel, or coconut logs and covered with thick layers of coral sand. Only a direct hit by bombs or naval gunfire would destroy the Japanese bunkers.

Any attackers would have to face coastal defense guns ranging from 80mm to 8-inch. From the reef onward, attacking troops would be under fire from 10 75mm mountain howitzers, 6 70mm guns, 9 37mm guns, about

The scene in the painting Gun Crews Cover the Landing Craft *(by David Fredenthal) is at Arawe on the southwest coast of New Britain in December 1943, but in the tension the painting reflects, the scene might well have been the difficult U.S. landings at Tarawa just three weeks before. The New Britain assault was a part of Douglas MacArthur's leap-frogging campaign in the Southwest Pacific, while the hurried invasion of Tarawa was the opening gun in the U.S. campaign in the Central Pacific.*

31 13mm machine guns, a large complement of 7.7mm machine guns, dual-purpose antiaircraft guns, and 7 light tanks equipped with 37mm guns.

Julian Smith could read these figures in the intelligence reports, and he did not like it at all. Complicating the task facing his division was the requirement to furnish one regimental combat team, built around the 6th Marines, to be the corps reserve for all of Operation GALVANIC, which also would include assaults on nearby Makin and Apamama. Losing one third of his combat power meant his assault forces would outnumber the Japanese by a ratio close to the traditional minimum of 3:1 for assaults on a fortified position. Smith knew he must persuade his superiors to help change the odds.

Julian Smith's immediate superior was Major General Holland M. Smith, USMC, whose name and temper had long suggested his nickname of "Howling Mad." Holland Smith commanded the V Amphibious Corps, composed of the 2nd Marine Division and the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Division, which was supplying the assault units for Makin. Command of the amphibious portion of GALVANIC rested with Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner—Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance was responsible for the overall Gilberts campaign.

The command structure for GALVANIC followed the doctrine worked out over the years for the amphibious portion of a naval campaign. Naval officers controlled each landing until such time as the situation allowed the ground commander to establish his headquarters ashore. Thus, Holland Smith was subordinate to Admiral Turner, who, for GALVANIC, retained personal control over the Northern Attack Force which would take Makin. The Southern Attack Force, scheduled for Tarawa and composed of transports, naval gunfire support ships and the 2nd Marine Division, came under the command of Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill.

All of these commanders faced difficulties as GALVANIC took shape, and many of the problems can be traced to time and circumstance. The Gilberts campaign occurred at the dividing line between two periods in the war. It came at the beginning of the major Central Pacific drive, but also at the end of the era of fighting the war on a shoestring. American factories and shipyards were turning out material at a prodigious rate, but the Pacific Theater was not yet feeling the full benefit. Some needed items were virtually on the pier at San Diego, Calif. Many desirable assets would be reaching the fighting forces within a few short weeks, but GALVANIC could not wait. It had to be executed quickly in order to provide time and space for planning the Marshalls campaign, and, of immediate importance, before Admiral Shibasaki's men completed the defenses of Tarawa. Nevertheless, the shortages were troublesome to all American commanders.

Communications equipment for controlling a complicated amphibious assault was one of the critically short items. Special command ships, jammed with communications equipment and nearing completion at Stateside shipyards, would not be available. Many of the troop transports had only the commercial radios used on merchant ships. The Marine units' tactical radios were poor, with problems ranging from low power to inadequate batteries to lack of sufficient waterproofing. One improvisation by Admiral Hill's staff was to arrange for a makeshift communications center on one wing of the flag bridge of his

The first waves of Marines assaulting Betio were fortunate in that their LVT Amtracs were *able to cross the shallow-draft reef guarding the islet—had all the Marines been forced to wade ashore from the reef, the outcome at Tarawa might have been even more costly. Once ashore, the amphibious vehicles provided some protection for the landing troops, as well.* Beachhead Scene, Marines at Tarawa *by Kerr Eby.*

command ship, the battleship *Maryland*. The ship, however, also had a naval gunfire role to play, and the blast from its main batteries might possibly knock out the system. The one bright note was that several of the invasion ships had a few of the new Army radios which had been installed for the Aleutians campaign. They were reliable sets and could be expected to play an important role in the coming campaign.

The critical problem at Betio, believed the commander and staff of the 2nd Marine Division, was getting over the reef and onto the narrow beach as quickly as possible. Normally, the Navy's landing craft would have been the answer, but, Tarawa posed unusual problems. Peculiarities of wind, ocean currents, and the shape of the ocean basin combined to make the tides at Tarawa unpredictable. On the day of the landing, scheduled during the period of neap, or lowest, tides, the water over the reef might exceed the 3½ feet needed by landing craft. The reef could also be dry. No one knew for certain; even the advice from Europeans familiar with the area was mixed.

The obvious answer was to place the initial assault waves in the amphibian tractors called by the name Landing Vehicle, Tracked, or LVTs ("Amphtrac" was frequently used at the time; "Amtrac" came into vogue later). Unfortunately, these vehicles were in short supply, plus no one knew for sure if they could successfully navigate a coral reef.

To solve the latter question, a group of men, LVTs, and Sherman tanks went all the way to the Fiji Islands to prove these vehicles could operate over shallow reefs such as those at Tarawa.

The number of LVTs available was a more difficult problem. The 2nd Marine Division had only about 100 of the early model LVT-1s left over from the Guadalcanal campaign. These vehicles were almost worn out. In addition, they were unarmored and vulnerable to small-arms fire and shell fragments. Despite a major effort by the division's mechanics, only about 75 of these LVTs would be available for Tarawa. Armor improvised in New Zealand from boiler plate would provide some protection for the drivers, but the embarked infantrymen still would have none.

Julian Smith demanded that his 2nd Marine Division be shipped some of the new LVT-2s available in San Diego. These tractors had more powerful engines, a slightly faster speed in the water, and some armor protection. The initial Navy answer was negative, but Smith's arguments won out. Fifty of the new LVTs were loaded in LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) and sent by way of Samoa to rendervous with the assault forces. A company from the 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion left New Zealand and met the tractors in Samoa to familiarize themselves with the new vehicles.

Julian Smith's other major request was for a company of Sherman medium tanks from the V Amphibious Corps. The 37mm guns on the division's own light tanks obviously were not enough for the defensive positions on Betio. The infantrymen would need the heavier 75mm guns that were mounted on the Shermans. Holland Smith granted the request.

Turned down, however, was Julian Smith's accompanying proposal to land artillery on an unoccupied island in the Tarawa Atoll prior to the assault on Betio. Time, his superiors insisted, was too short. The airfield on Betio had to be taken and placed in operation before the Japanese

Combined Fleet could sortie against the invasion forces.

The 2nd Marine Division completed its operation plan in early October 1943 and began embarking on its transports at the end of the month. Few members of the division knew they were headed for combat. The division hierarchy put out the cover story that it would hold a landing exercise and be back in camp for liberty over the weekend. Instead, the ships headed for Efate in the New Hebrides for a rehearsal.

While at Efate, Julian Smith had to replace the man scheduled to command the actual assault units, due to illness. Smith chose as a replacement Lt. Col. David M. Shoup, the division operations officer who had developed the plans for Tarawa. Shoup received a spot promotion to colonel and command of Combat Team 2, the reinforced regimental landing team which would lead the American assault on Betio.

The amphibious assault force reached Tarawa undetected by the Japanese. The transports hove off the atoll just before dawn on November 20, 1943, and began to load Marines into their boats (LCVPs—Landing Craft Vehicles and Personnel) and amphibian tractors. An unexpected current, however, soon forced the ships to shift positions. Then a red star cluster arched over Betio, and the Japanese shore batteries opened fire on the American transports, which quickly moved farther out to sea.

The American fire-support ships returned the Japanese fire. When the *Maryland* fired her main batteries, however, the concussion knocked out some of the communications equipment rigged on the flag bridge. Nevertheless, the return fire did silence the Japanese batteries.

During the bombardment—and strikes by Navy aircraft—the various assault craft moved slowly toward the entrance to the lagoon. Two small minesweepers cleared the entrance despite Japanese shells. The destroyers *Ringgold* and *Dashiel*, moving into the lagoon to provide naval gunfire support for the landing, silenced these guns. *Ringgold*, in the process, suffered two hits, both duds.

Disastrously, meanwhile, the amphibian tractors of the first waves were moving too slowly—they obviously could not reach the beaches by 0830, the scheduled H-Hour. Admiral Hill postponed it until 0845, and then until 0900. The *Dashiel* and *Ringgold*, whose view of the tractors was not obscured by the pall of smoke and coral dust raised over Betio by the American bombardment, continued to provide covering fire.

The mistakes of hurried planning now began to haunt the American military strategists—and, worse, their men engaged in the assault on Betio. With communications knocked out aboard the battleship *Maryland*, Admiral Hill had no way of knowing how close to landing were the first waves of Marines in their "*Alligator*" Amtracs. He was forced, rather than destroy his own forces, to lift the offshore bombardment prematurely. The respite of nearly half an hour gave the stunned Japanese time to regroup and prepare for the landing troops.

Unknown as yet, too, the depth of water washing over the barrier reef would *not* be enough to allow passage of the LCVP boats carrying later waves of the Marines ashore. As a result, hundreds of men were destined both on D-Day and on the next day to attempt wading ashore in a half-mile stretch of deep water, under sheets of murderous fire all the way.

That long walk was to be a nightmare that no participant or observer ever forgot—a shock also to the distantly informed American public, a simmering cause of controversy over the Tarawa operation for years to come.

The tractors of the first landing waves were headed to three beaches. RED 1 to the west covered the beak and throat of the bird-shaped island. RED 2 ran from the breast to the pier which represented the bird's legs. RED 3 was on the other, or eastern, side of the pier.

Before the first waves landed, the pier had to be cleared of Japanese. The job went to the 2nd Scout-Sniper Platoon, a unit of the regimental headquarters of the 2nd Marines. The platoon, commanded by 1st Lt. William D. Hawkins, landed at the ramp at the tip of the pier. Hawkins, in the first of a series of actions which would earn him a posthumous Medal of Honor, led his men onto the pier, where they quickly killed the few Japanese occupying the wooden structure. In the process they used a flame thrower to set fire to two shacks. The fire spread to the pier itself and burned gaps in it. This did not affect the beach assault, but later hampered the use of the pier for resupplying the assault battalions.

The shelling by the two destroyers in the lagoon proved crucial. Not only did it destroy some key Japanese beach defenses, but it also forced the remainder of the Japanese to keep their heads down. The 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines,

JAPANESE DEFENSES ON TARAWA

Japanese defense positions on Betio showed great ingenuity in the use of man-made and natural, locally available materials. Some of the smaller bunkers were of steel plates fabricated into a pyramid. When covered with a thick layer of sand, these provided excellent protection for the defenders. Steel-reinforced concrete went into coast defense emplacements and large structures, such as command centers, bomb shelters and material-storage points. Many of these large structures, strictly speaking, were not fighting positions, though pictures of their capture made for dramatic news releases and films for public consumption.

Coconut logs, a byproduct of the construction of the airfield, went into the creation of hidden fighting positions which were extremely resistant to bombs and shells. Fibrous palm tree trunks are strong, resiliant, and resist splintering by explosives. In fact, bunkers made of these palms, and covered with several feet of soft, yielding coral sand, could be destroyed only by direct hits by bombs and large-caliber shells. Flame throwers and explosive charges thrust into these positions might kill every person inside without doing much damage to the structure itself.

The Japanese garrison, whose plan was to destroy its enemies in the water or at the shoreline, made superb use of obstacles. The outlying coral reef itself was a major impediment to any assault; concrete tetrahedrons made it even tougher for boats to cross. Double-apron, barbed-wire fences zigzagged across the reef also. These man-made obstacles channelized attackers into the killing zones for machine guns, artillery, and anti-boat guns. Overlapping fields of fire covered virtually the entire reef up to the shoreline.

The primary weakness of the Japanese defenses was that they were not yet complete on the lagoon side when the Americans arrived. Some mines, for example, had been emplaced there, but were not yet armed. Another problem for the garrison during the battle was the lack of a tactical communications system other than telephones. Once the naval bombardment cut this system, the garrison commander had no reliable alternative for effective control of his forces. The garrison even lacked the field message books which the Marines had encountered

attached to Shoup's command for the operation, reached shore relatively unscathed. Two of its amphibians took advantage of a gap in the coconut-log seawall and movec inland on their rubber tractor tires before discharging their infantrymen at the edge of the airfield. The battalion, landing in good order and with only about 25 casualties, began attacking the Japanese defenses. The battalion commander, Major Henry "Jim" Crowe, established his command post in the lee of an amphibious tractor which had been disabled trying to climb the seawall, and there began directing the actions of his command. The 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, was ashore, and, though engaged in heavy fighting, had access to the interior of the island.

The other assault battalions were not nearly as lucky. Heavy fire from artillery and antiboat guns knocked out several tractors carrying the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, into RED 2 at center. Marines had to go over the side of these vehicles and wade ashore in deep water to the relative safety of the seawall.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Herbert Amey, died before reaching the beach. His tractor became entangled in barbed wire about 200 yards from shore. Amey and about 15 officers and men disembarked and began moving toward the seawall. Machine-gun fire quickly killed Amey and several others; the remainder reached safety. Lieutenant Colonel Walter Jordan, there as an observer from the 4th Marine Division, realized the battalion executive officer had not yet reached the beach. Jordan promptly assumed command. Since all available radios were inoperable due to enemy fire or immersion, Jordan sent runners to locate the assault companies. Reports trickled in. Marines had managed to get over the seawall in a few

A Higgins boat, or LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicles and Personnel), "moves in to close in on a smoke-covered island," says the official Marine Corps caption of November 20-23, 1943. While the "smoke-covered island" is unidentified in the wartime caption, the dates correspond with the Tarawa Operation—in which the LCVPs at first could not clear Betio's outer reef, with disastrous result for the landing Marines.

U.S. Marines stalk and capture a Japanese pillbox housing a light machine gun.

so often on Guadalcanal.

The final major weakness was that the defenses, though strong and composed of mutually supporting emplacements, were only a crust around the shoreline. Once the Marines penetrated that crust, they were able to assault bunkers from their more vulnerable sides and rear. Even so, the punch of the 75mm guns of the Sherman tanks (and the half tracks used on D+3) proved crucial to the rapid termination of the fighting. When assaulting strong enemy positions, armor was far more effective than grenades and explosive charges hurled by infantry fighting behind cotton shirts.

So searing was the lesson of Tarawa, however, that exact replicas of the Japanese bunkers would be built in Hawaii for experiment in the tactics needed to subdue such fortifications in the future. Scout-Sniper Platoon Leader William D. Hawkins, meanwhile, didn't die in the initial, D-Day assault on the wooden landing pier at Betio.

Moving onto shore and fighting through that first day, through the night, and until dawn the following day, he repeatedly directed or led attacks on the Japanese pillboxes with grenades and demolition charges.

At dawn on D+1, his citation for the Medal of Honor notes, ". . . (he) resumed the dangerous mission of clearing the limited beachhead of Japanese resistance, personally initiating an assault on a hostile position fortified by five enemy machine guns, and, crawling forward in the face of withering fire, boldly fired point-blank into the loopholes and completed the destruction with grenades."

He refused to withdraw after being seriously wounded in the chest. He continued to carry the fight to the enemy, "destroying three more pillboxes before he was caught in a burst of Japanese shellfire and mortally wounded."

TOP: Clearly evident here is the destructive effect of war to a lovely Pacific atoll—its normal beauty in late 1943 a deceptive facade for the U.S. Marines assaulting the cleverly hidden Japanese bunkers built in defense of the island paradise. CENTER: Under fire and running for cover on Tarawa are four U.S. Marines. At Tarawa, the Marines met nearly impregnable Japanese bunkers, but they fortunately formed only an outer crust of defense. Once the ring was penetrated at one point, the bunkers could be assaulted from within the crust. BOTTOM: With a wrecked Japanese Zero in the foreground, a U.S. Hellcat fighter lands on the newly liberated airstrip at Tarawa—a major objective of the costly assault on the Japanese-held atoll in the Central Pacific late in 1943.

places and move inland a short distance. One company, however, lost half its men in the process; the others were not much better off. As both officer and NCO casualties increased, the assault dwindled. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, essentially was held at the waterline.

Some men demonstrated extraordinary courage in the savage fighting. Staff Sergeant William Bordelon, an assault engineer attached to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, destroyed two Japanese pillboxes with demolition charges. Machine-gun fire wounded him as he attacked a third position, but he continued to fight by providing covering fire for others trying to advance over the seawall. He refused medical treatment, and even moved back into the water to aid two wounded Marines to the shelter of the seawall. Bordelon, carrying a demolition charge, attacked another emplacement, only to be killed by machine-gun fire. He, too, would receive a posthumous Medal of Honor.

RED BEACH 1, on the beak and neck of the island, to the west, may have been even tougher. A large volume of Japanese fire from a mini-bastion of antiboat and machine guns chewed up the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines. The battalion lost several tractors in the water, and the Japanese killed many of the men as they tried to reach dry land. In the deeper water, Marines and Navy medical corpsmen crouched as low as possible, but as they neared the beach, the bottom shoaled upward, and they had no choice but to move forward as quickly as possible. Wounded men who could not stand drowned, unless others were close enough to hold their heads above water.

Private N.M. Baird, an Amtrac machine-gunner, thought the bullets bouncing off his tractor sounded like hailstones on a tin roof. As the tractor neared the shore, he noticed that Japanese shells were knocking out other tractors on both sides of his own. The tractor jerked and bucked as it crossed the rough coral reef. A Japanese bullet pierced the bow, and killed the driver. A lieutenant took over, but was himself soon killed.

A shell struck Baird's tractor, knocking him down and wounding or killing most of the men on board. Splinters from other shells nicked him in the face and hands; a piece about one inch long hit him in the back. The tractor was stopped and the Japanese were bringing heavy machine-gun fire to bear. Baird sized up the situation and yelled, "Let's get the hell out of here!" Grabbing his carbine, he rolled over the side of the tractor and into the water. Of the 25 men in the tractor, only about a dozen were able to follow suit, and only about four survived to be evacuated to hospital ships.

The 3rd Battalion commander, Major John Schoettel, was still offshore with half his battalion embarked in boats (LCVPs). His men, like all those in similar craft, could get no closer than the edge of the reef several hundred yards from shore. The unpredictable "dodging tides" of Tarawa had left too little water on the reef. The LCVPs could not get across.

Major Schoettel realized that few of the amphibian tractors were coming back from the beach; wrecked ones dotted the water between the beach and the edge of the reef. Schoettel decided to postpone the landing of the rest of his battalion. Ashore, Major Michael P. Ryan of Company L assumed control of the remnants of both L and K.

Schoettel contacted Assault Commander Shoup by radio and reported that he was unable to land the rest of the battalion. Shoup ordered him to land at RED 2 and work his way to his assigned beach. Several hours later Schoettel radioed that he was still afloat and had no contact with his companies on RED 1. The division commander then entered the net to order Schoettel to land at

While a buddy prepares to hurl his hand grenade against Japanese defenders on Betio Island, Tarawa, a Marine armed with carbine and bandolier of bullets stands ready to "go over the top" as soon as the grenade has had its effects.

any cost, regain control of his battalion and to continue the attack. The major and the rest of his command managed to reach shore late that evening.

Shoup himself almost did not reach the beach alive. Japanese fire holed his amphibian tractor, and he and the rest of his small staff had to take to the water. They moved to the shelter of the pier and used its protection to work their way to the beach. En route, at 9:58 a.m., he ordered the landing of his regimental reserve, the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

This battalion, commanded by Major Wood B. Kyle, was in boats off the reef. Kyle managed to gather enough tractors for two of his rifle companies and sent them into the battle. A third company transferred to tractors around noon and began their approach to the deadly beach. Japanese fire forced tractors carrying more than 100 men of the 1st Battalion to shift toward RED 1, where they came under the control of Major Ryan. The rest suffered many casualties in reaching RED 2.

With Kyle's reserve battalion committed, Julian Smith directed the 8th Marines to send its 3rd Battalion to the line of departure at the reef. There were no amphibian tractors available, so the men comprising the first waves of the battalion entered the water—and the Japanese fire. They had more than 600 yards to cover in full sight of the enemy guns. The Japanese took full advantage of their plight. Of the approximately 300 men in these waves, only about one-third would reach the seawall in any condition to fight. The division ordered the remaining waves to remain in their boats at the reef's edge. These men were fed in slowly along the pier.

Shoup by now had reached the middle of RED 2, where he established his command post. The site was next to a large sand-covered bunker which, as events later proved, still contained live Japanese. (These trapped Japanese posed no problem until noon on D+1. One of them then fired out of a ventilator, wounding a Marine. Grenades and TNT blocks killed the remaining Japanese.) After determining the situation ashore, a difficult process, Shoup sent Lt. Col. Evans Carlson back out to the *Maryland*. "You tell the general and the admiral," Shoup ordered, "that we are going to stick and fight it out."

The day ended with the Americans still in a precarious position. Fortunately, the night passed without the expected Japanese counterattack. Naval gunfire's destruction of the Japanese communications system on Betio had prevented Admiral Shibasaki from organizing one. Unknown just then, too, half of his men already were casualties of the American assault. The major Japanese response that night came from the air. In an air raid by eight planes, the Japanese dropped three sticks of bombs, most of which hit the defenders, not the Americans. The latter's major efforts went into organizing the flow of supplies and a few reinforcements from the end of the pier to Betio.

The American logistics system in amphibious assaults was still rudimentary; it was one of the problems to receive major attention after Tarawa.

At 6:15 a.m. on D+1, landing craft still carrying the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, 20 hours after their embarkation the day before, dropped ramps at the edge of the reef. This battalion, too, went into the water—and into the fire from well-situated Japanese emplacements. Americans on the beach could see the battalion's numbers dwindling before their very eyes. Machine-gun fire killed many of the men instantly. Others, as had happened to many the day before, drowned after suffering wounds that left them unable to stand. Some Marines, weighted down by ammunition and heavy packs, drowned after stepping into potholes and bomb craters on the reef.

The Japanese fire seemed little diminished by the fighting of the previous day. Some of it, however, now came from the rusting hulk of a small Japanese freighter, the *Saida Maru*, lying near the edge of the reef. (It took the combined firepower of two battleships to turn the hulk into twisted metal, ending the sniper fire from that direction.) Robert Sherrod, the *Time* correspondent watching from shore, estimated that at least 200 Marines fell within a few minutes. Colonel Carlson, who happened to be on the end of the pier at the time, claimed he saw more than 100 men go down in the space of a minute. Wounded men stumbled and tried to retain their footing rather than drown. The more fortunate ones had friends nearby who helped them toward the relative safety of the seawall. Some managed to crawl on their elbows to shore, others clung to the Japanese barbed-wire entaglements until their strength gave out. They, like many farther out in deeper water, drowned because of their wounds. PFC James Collins, shocked by the patches of water red from blood, prayed harder than he had in his life. He did well to pray—only 3 of the 24 men in his boat made it safely to shore.

The survivors reached the seawall without flame throwers, heavy weapons or demolition kits, all discarded in the desperate effort to reach cover as quickly as possible. The exact number of casualties is conjectural. The battalion's disorganization from enemy fire, as well as the confused tactical situation ashore, precluded an exact muster. Many Marines had taken shelter behind wrecked amphibious tractors in the water; these trickled ashore for the rest of the morning. At best, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, retained only 50 percent of its combat power. Fed into the line and ordered to attack, the 1st Battalion could make no headway against the Japanese defenses.

Bitter fighting continued throughout the day, and in several places the Marine lines inched forward. The few Sherman tanks landed the day before helped, but the shortage of demolitions and flame throwers hampered the advance against stubborn resistance. Fortunately for the Americans, they were now moving into the interior of the island and in many cases were attacking the rear of Japanese emplacements and bunkers.

The largest gain on November 21 came on RED 1, where Major Ryan's men advanced down the beak and forehead of the bird-shaped island. A naval gunfire spotter had reached the position during the night with a functioning radio. He called in accurate fire from two destroyers—their pinpoint shooting destroyed many of the major Japanese positions. This performance was a prelude to techniques used successfully in the Marshalls campaign a few months later. By 11 a.m., Ryan's men had reached their objective.

Ryan's accomplishment gave the division a clear area to land reinforcements from the 6th Marines, which had been released for use on Betio. The 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, under Major William K. Jones, landed in rubber boats near the beak that afternoon, and was in place for an attack down the bird's back the following morning. Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray's 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, landed on an adjacent island. Marine artillery landed there the next morning and supported the attack by the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. These reinforcements gave the 2nd Marine Division the means to finish the battle.

Sunrise on the 22nd, D+2, brought the high tide that the division had hoped to encounter on D-Day. With it, bobbing slowly, came the bloated bodies of Marines killed trying to reach shore. They added to the all-pervasive smell of death which clung to the island.

That morning, two battalions of the 6th Marines (the 3rd Battalion had landed the previous evening), supported by tanks, attacked from the island's beak toward its tail. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, also attacked south from the pier area, cutting the island in two. The battalions from the 6th Marines passed through the 2nd Battalion, and made steady progress in the morning, but met stiff resistance in the afternoon. By dark, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, was east of the airfield. Major Jones placed his men in defensive positions, ready in case of a Japanese night attack. The precautions were not wasted. Several hundred Japanese struck the Marine lines at various times during the night, only to be decimated by artillery, naval gunfire and small arms. More than 200 Japanese dead lay close to the battalion's positions when the sun rose on D+3. By early afternoon, the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, had reached the tail end of Betio.

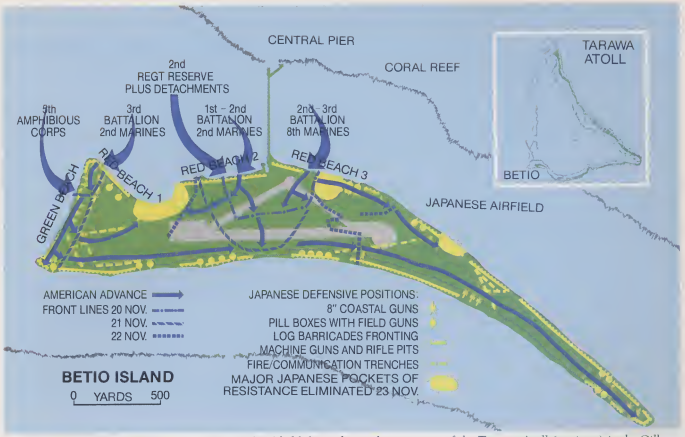
Elsewhere on D+3, Shoup sent the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, and the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, against the last remaining pocket of Japanese resistance, located in the throat area of the island, near the junctures of RED 1 and 2. Supported by half tracks mounting antitank guns, the two small battalions reduced the pocket shortly after noon. At 1:05 p.m., Shoup notified the division of the capture of the area. Although the Marines spent several days mopping up isolated defenders, the 76-hour battle for Betio had ended.

Navy Seabees already had been working on the airfield, readying it for American use. The first Navy plane landed around noon of D+3, before the island was officially secure. The plane soon took off—within an hour—but American forces were using the field for which so many had died.

The 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, which had seen relatively little combat, inherited the task of clearing the remaining islands of the Tarawa atoll. Its men finished by November 28th.

Most of the 2nd Marine Division, meanwhile, had begun re-embarking for the voyage to the division's new camps in Hawaii. Not until after the ships set sail did the division obtain its first full accounting of its casualties at Tarawa. A total of 1,027 Marines and Navy personnel died for Tarawa; another 2,292 were wounded. The bodies of 88 men, presumably among those who died in the lagoon, were never found. Of the nearly 5,000-man enemy garrison on Betio, 129 Koreans and 17 Japanese were prisoners of war; the rest perished.

Of the American assault forces, the overall casualty rate was approximately 18.8 percent; for the actual assault units, it approached 30 percent. The 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion suffered 49 percent casualties, including the battalion commander, who died on D-Day. Few of its tractors were worth taking away from Betio. On board the transports, no one expressed regret when Tarawa disappeared astern.



Like an embryonic bird lying on its side, Betio Island held down the southwest corner of the Tarawa Atoll (see inset) in the Gilbert Islands of the Central Pacific. The long wooden pier extending northward into the lagoon could have been the "bird's" thin leg, while the body of the creature occupied the center of the surrounding reef. The RED landing beaches for the U.S. Marines assaulting the Japanese bastion in November 1943 were RED 1 at the beak and throat of the bird; RED 2 from the breast to the pier, and RED 3, just east of the pier.

Both sides entered the battle for Tarawa with pluses and minuses. The Japanese strategy for defending the Gilberts resembled the prewar American plan for the defense of the Philippines. Heavily entrenched garrisons would hold out long enough for the fleet to arrive and engage the enemy in a decisive sea battle. The garrison on Betio played its part courageously, but recent sea battles elsewhere in the Pacific had depleted the Japanese carrier aviation force. Without planes on the carriers to provide air cover, the fleet could not sortie against the American invasion force, a factor that doomed the Betio garrison.

The garrison also faced some serious tactical deficiencies. Its personnel had not completed the lagoon side of their defenses, particularly the placing and arming of mines. Their arsenal lacked mortars, the one weapon which might have made the Marines' toeholds behind the seawall untenable. There was no system of tactical radio communications among the Japanese positions—not even message books for carrying orders to scattered units. When the American naval bombardment destroyed his wire communications, Admiral Shibasaki had no effective means for coordinating his forces in the face of the American ground attack. Individual emplacements virtually fought alone. Worse, the defenses were only a crust—admittedly a very tough one—along the edges of the island. Once the Americans breached that crust, there was no organized defense system in the interior, and the Marines could destroy the Japanese defense system from the inside out.

The Americans' greatest weakness at Tarawa was the ineffectiveness of their naval gunfire support. Even though the support allocated was the largest thus far in the Pacific—and immeasurably more than that provided for the disastrous British raid on Dieppe, where some units lost 85 percent of their men—it was not enough. The approach was wrong, partly from unwarranted faith in the neutralization power of naval gunfire, and partly from the apparent necessity of capturing the objective quickly, before the arrival of the Japanese fleet. The plan divided the island into areas into which the ships fired to "neutralize" the Japanese defenses. Inevitably, this placed a significant portion of the naval bombardment in the interior of Betio, away from the defense system around its periphery. The situation actually called for pinpoint control and direct hits on the bunkers and emplacements. That system and method—quickly developed after the lesson of Tarawa—proved successful only a few months later in the far more heavily fortified Marshalls. Other improvements included closer tank-infantry cooperation, a shift to medium rather than light tanks, and a better logistics and beach-party organization, all derived from experience at Tarawa. Command ships, more and better amphibian tractors and tactical radios—more of everything—were on the way. Much changed very quickly after Tarawa—except the courage and tenacity of Japanese garrisons determined to defend to their individual deaths the island stepping stones to Japan. □

V. Keith Fleming, Jr., commanded a Marine rifle company in Vietnam and now writes official history for the Marine Corps. For further reading he suggests Robert Sherrod's Tarawa: The Story of a Battle *and* Henry I. Shaw, Jr.'s Tarawa: A Legend is Born. *See also the recent* 76 Hours: The Invasion of Tarawa *by Eric Hammel and John E. Lane.*

Once a hunting lodge for the kings of Saxony, once also put to use as an insane asylum, Germany's forboding castle at Colditz became in World War II the final lodging place for escape-prone Allied POWs of officer rank. Towards war's end, the castle's POW residents found themselves in a squeeze between onrushing Allied armies and German defenders. INSET AT RIGHT: *For the POW of any side, any war, the prospect of indeterminate captivity is obviously bleak to consider. If not barbed wire and other fencing, the barriers to freedom can—as in the case of Germany's Colditz Castle—even be the walls of a fortress. At Colditz, however, escape-prone Allied POWs only thought the more of escape and flight back to friendly lines.*

Ordeal of Liberation At Colditz

For the escape-prone POWs at Colditz Castle, the long moment of possible liberation posed dangerous uncertainties. Caught between onrushing armies from east and west, the German SS was determined to make a last-ditch stand in the shadow of the castle's walls.

By Eric Narveson

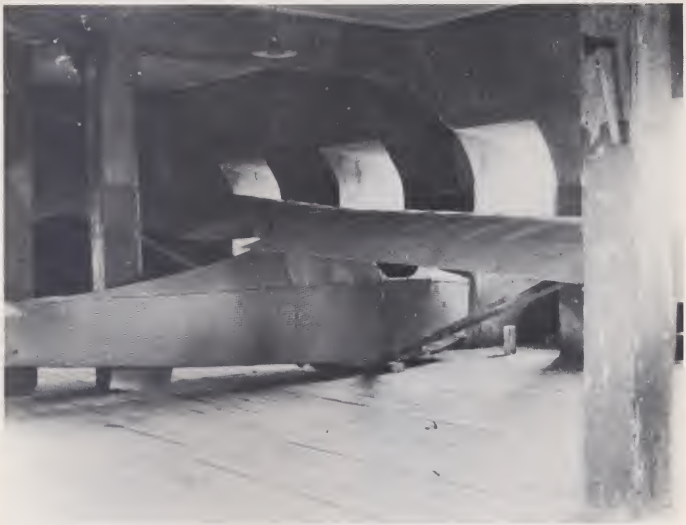
In the spring of 1945, Nazi Germany was experiencing the worst humiliation a nation can suffer. Two gigantic enemy armies had invaded the German homeland, seizing or destroying everything in their paths. The end of the war—the liberation of Europe—was in sight. Among the many places captured by the Allies that spring were Nazi prisoner of war camps. The storybook castle at Colditz, with its cache of "problem prisoners," was one of them.

Colditz lay roughly in the center of a geographic triangle formed by the cities of Leipzig, Dresden, and Chemnitz (now Karl Marx Stadt), in Saxony, Germany. In April 1945, the Soviet First Ukrainian Army was advancing from the east, pushing a torrent of refugees ahead of it, while the U.S. First Army was advancing from the west.

War was not new to Colditz, for nearly 800 years a summer hunting lodge for the kings of Saxony. The castle was sacked in 1634 by Imperialists in the Thirty Years' War. Swedes occupied the fortress in 1635, 1639, 1642, and 1706. In 1800, Colditz became a prison, and in 1828 an insane asylum. The Nazis turned Colditz into a concentration camp in 1933; in the late 1930s, the grounds were used as a Hitler Youth Work Camp.

When World War II started, Colditz simply took on a new identity. Beginning in October 1939, the castle was an Allied prisoner of war camp. At first it held Polish officers captured in the *blitzkrieg* invasion of Poland. Later, Colditz confined only the most dangerous and habitual escapers—the Germans thinking it an excellent idea to keep all their most troublesome prisoners in one jail. Colditz quickly gained a proud reputation among Allied prisoners of war as the camp for "bad boys." Officially named *Kriegsgefangenenoffizierssonderlager* (Special Officer Prisoner of War Camp) IV C, or simply Oflag IV C, the castle held captive Czechs, Poles, Dutch, Belgians, French, Yugoslavs, Britons, Canadians, Indians, South Africans, Australians, New Zealanders, and Americans.

Such men were not discouraged by the fact that the Germans considered their camp escape-proof. Indeed, this



The British POWs at Colditz went so far as to build themselves a glider in the castle attic—never used, however.

merely encouraged them to challenge the camp's exalted reputation by increasing their escape attempts. The prisoners tried to break out with such frequency and determination that an attempt occurred on the average of once every 10 days for more than four years. Escapers tried every conceivable route: through walls and bars, over roofs and ceilings, under floors and foundations, in concealment and disguise. They exploited almost any change in the monotony of prison life with an escape attempt, theft, or other distraction that was aimed at aiding some future escape.

Being a prisoner of war was a fulltime occupation. With little else to do, prisoners developed ingenious escape plans and methods. Escapes varied in speed, size, and effort. Some were as quick and impromptu as a dash around a wall on an exercise walk, or a gymnastic vault over a barbed-wire wall. Others were long and well-planned, involving scores of men, as in the case of a French-built tunnel. It took the French prisoners eight months to dig a 144-foot tunnel through solid rock, using table knives and soup spoons, only to be discovered by the Germans with less than a week's work left before breaking out. Other escape attempts were equally daring and imaginative. British prisoners even built a glider in the castle attic (although, as events transpired, it never was to be flown).

Between escape attempts, prisoners busied themselves with a variety of morale-boosting activities, including the time-honored prerogative of baiting their captors. Mock German salutes (the thumb turned inward to form a surreptitious Churchillian "V"), rooftop water bombs, obscene puns on foreign words, cigarette smoke blown "accidentally" into a sentry's face—all formed part of the prisoners' prankish humor. Scarcely an *Appell*, or roll call, went by without an indignant German officer despairing, "*Sind Sie Offiziere oder Kinder?*"—Are you officers or children? Invariably, a chorus of raspberries would be his answer.

Prisoners also organized more refined entertainments: elaborate pantomimes, musicales, and full-dress "ballets" featuring tough-looking POWs prancing about in paper tutus. A rough-and-tumble version of English soccer, called stoolball, was also popular, with scores of prisoners wrestling, gouging, and pummeling each other senseless in an effort to touch a goalie's stool with the ball. Games were arranged between the different nationalities represented within the prison, but were discontinued after they proved too damaging to Allied co-existence—particularly when an insouciant group of Frenchmen upset the heavily favored British team.

Food rations for prisoners were adequate, if not exactly delectable. Coffee was brewed from acorns; potatoes and turnips formed the staple diet, augmented by bread, barley, peas, and a bitter-tasting jam substitute which looked—and tasted—like tar. Food parcels from home were occasionally permitted: tinned meat, vegetables, cheese, real jam and jellies, chocolate, cocoa, sugar and cooking fat. These much-coveted items, by common accord, were put into a pool for all to share.

LEFT: Dummies, too, played their role in escape attempts at Colditz, and here a onetime resident of the POW camp displays the handiwork of the POWs in that regard. CENTER: British Lieutenant Airey Neave, later to become a Member of Parliament, is seen here after his attempt to escape while posing as a German corporal, ersatz uniform included. RIGHT: Another onetime POW from Colditz attempted to disguise himself as a woman for his escape attempt.

The internationality of the camp disappeared with the removal of French, Polish, Dutch, and Belgian POWs in 1943. The remaining prisoners were primarily from the British Commonwealth. The intensity of escape attempts began to taper off after June 6, 1944, when the Allies landed in Normandy. The prisoners anticipated liberation by September, so escape efforts were deemed unnecessary.

In the fall of 1944, new special prisoners began arriving at the castle, including three Americans captured by the Gestapo during the German conquest of Hungary in March. In this way, the *Prominente* class of prisoners increased in number. These were special prisoners, hostages really, who were believed to possess exceptional value because of kinship to various high-level British officials or because of other political importance to the Allies. The *Prominente* included Giles Romilly, nephew of Winston Churchill; Captain the Earl of Hopetown, eldest son of the Viceroy of India; Captain the Master of Elphinstone, nephew of Queen Elizabeth and King George VI; Polish General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, leader of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944; and John Winant, Jr., son of the American Ambassador to Great Britain. These men were kept separated from the rest of the prison population, their activities observed day and night. The German government felt these *Prominente* could be used to bargain for certain treaty concessions, for anything less than unconditional surrender. Sensible leaders could see, even if Adolf Hitler could not, that the handwriting was very clearly on the wall.

The British government was quite concerned about the fate of the *Prominente*. On February 19, 1945, Churchill's War Cabinet even discussed the idea of a special rescue mission by parachutists, who would land at the castle and free the *Prominente*. With the support of Prime Minister Churchill and King George VI, this plan eventually became a directive from Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) to the First Allied Airborne Army, but was never carried out, due primarily to the swiftness of the Allied advance into Germany.

On February 26, 1945, more than 1,700 French prisoners arrived at Colditz after an 85-mile march from their eastern camp, which had been threatened by advancing Soviets. Overnight, Colditz became severely overcrowded, the camp population nearly quintupling. Twelve hundred Frenchmen were assigned to the castle; the other 500 were held in the town jail.

The first sign of the advancing armies was the arrival of Soviet *Stormovik* fighters over the area. On the night of April 9, one plane strafed the castle, to the total surprise of prisoners and guards. The Allied POWs thought the castle had been mistaken for an army or *Waffen* SS headquarters, and belatedly realized that as fighting drew closer, it would be dangerous to be confined within such a significant military target as the castle.

The prisoners' apprehension increased the next day when remnants of a retreating German infantry regiment arrived in the town of Colditz. The commanding officer, a captain, had orders to make a stand at the Mulde River, a few hundred yards west of the castle. He met with the Colditz *Kommandant*, Lt. Col. Gerhard Prawitt, and demanded to know the camp's strength. The paltry garrison consisted now of 200 men between the ages of 50 and 65, armed with rifles and a mere 15 rounds of ammunition apiece. They also had 10 machine guns but little ammunition.

The captain immediately realized the castle's troops were not much better-off than his own unit. The regiment was down to a few hundred men from its original strength of over 2,000 soldiers, and it had only three 75mm guns remaining in its artillery reserve. Deciding to draw upon what little strength the town could provide, he turned to the *Partei Kreisleiter* (Nazi Party District Leader), who

obligingly mustered his *Volkssturm* Battalion.

The *Volkssturm* were more or less able-bodied men from the ages of 16 to 60, as defined by special order of Adolf Hitler in late 1944. The Colditz *Volkssturm* Battalion consisted entirely of old men and boys, except the *Kreisleiter* (who was about 50) and the *Bauleiter*, a 35-year-old local Nazi leader. Armed with only one rifle for every tenth man, plus a few *Panzerfausts* (hand-carried, single-shot antitank weapons), this group had little military training and no combat experience. On the afternoon they were mustered, the *Volkssturm* began to practice with their few weapons under the supervision of soldiers from the newly arrived infantry regiment.

By April 11, the inhabitants of Colditz could see and hear the war first-hand. A few prisoners stationed at castle windows spotted smoke on the western horizon. Occasionally during the day, occupants of the camp could hear the rumble of heavy artillery off to the west. They also followed the progress of the U.S. First Army from BBC reports received on a hidden radio.

The Germans were watching and listening too. During the day, Army Command Area IV, at Glauchau, sent a secret order to the *Kommandantur* (Camp Headquarters), advising that upon receipt of the code word *Heidenroslein* (rockrose), the *Prominente* were to be removed to another prison in Königstein, 50 miles east of Colditz. Two trucks were sent, with an escort, to insure the move would be successfully completed.

A new sight shocked the castle's inhabitants on the morning of April 12. Thousands of refugees were pouring over the town bridge across the Mulde, heading west before the Soviet advance. Homeless civilians clogged the roads with oxcarts, pushcarts, and horse-drawn wagons full of terrified, freezing, and starving old men, women, and children. Propaganda stories of "inhuman" Russians were working in reverse—Germans, no longer feeling superior to the Russians, were now fleeing the Slavic hordes from the east.

In town, the *Volkssturm* continued to prepare a last-ditch defense, digging slit trenches and reinforcing houses at the western outskirts of the village. Some townsmen and soldiers spent the morning underneath the town bridge, planting nearly ancient explosives that dated from World War I.

Sometime after 5 p.m., the code word *Heidenroslein* came through to the castle by telephone from Glauchau. The orders had said that *Prominente* were to be moved within two hours after reception of the code word. But Colonel Prawitt decided to delay the move until after final roll call at 10 p.m. After the roll call, the Senior British Officer, W. "Willie" Tod, was informed of the move, and he immediately requested to see the *Kommandant*. Tod, Brigadier E. F. Davies of the British Army, and Lt. Col. Florimond Duke of the U.S. Army stormed in to see Colonel Prawitt.

Tod, who had lost a son in the war, demanded that the *Kommandant* ignore the order to move the *Prominente*. Since Prawitt could not be sure of the ever-changing situation on the front, Tod said, he could claim with some plausibility that the message had never been received. Tod argued that it would be madness to send two truckloads of prisoners through the constantly narrowing corridor between American and Soviet forces. Prawitt responded that he was threatened with execution if he did not deliver the *Prominente* to Königstein.

Tod continued to press Prawitt. The trucks might be strafed by Allied aircraft, he said. Prawitt replied that the move would take place at night and be completed by dawn. Tod responded that the SS, or some fanatical group of regular soldiers, would shoot at any unidentified, unauthorized transport, or else confiscate the vehicles and strand the *Prominente* somewhere in hostile territory. The *Kommandant* assured him the prisoners would be heavily guarded by a contingent from the Königstein prison, and would be safe during the move. At Tod's continued urging, however, Prawitt agreed to send Captain Reinhold Eggers, Colditz's security officer, along as far as Königstein. At that point, Eggers was to return with a statement signed by the members of the *Prominente* announcing their safe arrival and subsequent transfer of responsibility.

At 1:30 a.m., the *Prominente* were marched into the courtyard of the *Kommandantur*, where two trucks were waiting. They left the castle escorted by two motorcycles, an armored car, and the reluctant Eggers. As the trucks went through the gate, Churchill's nephew, Romilly, jauntily called back to his comrades, "I thought you'd all like to know that today is Friday, the thirteenth!"

The next morning, the last vestiges of an unidentified *Waffen SS* division arrived in the Colditz area. It immediately prepared to defend the hills east of the castle and behind

THE RED FOX OF COLDITZ

Despite the great number and variety of escape attempts at Colditz, only one Allied prisoner was killed by German guards while trying to escape. Ironically, he was also the most determined and proficient escaper at the prison: British Lieutenant Michael Sinclair, known to his captors as *"Der Rote Fuchs"*—the Red Fox.

Sinclair, an officer with the 60th Rifles, was captured by the Germans at Calais, France, early in the war. His first escape, from a camp in northeastern Germany, took him through Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, before his recapture at the Bulgarian border. En route to Colditz, he escaped twice more before ever reaching the "escape-proof" castle.

The red-haired, Cambridge-educated Sinclair soon became legendary to prisoners and guards alike for his absolutely unshakable resolution to escape at the slightest opportunity. In all, he made six escape attempts at Colditz, including two in which he successfully breached the prison's walls and nearly succeeded in reaching Switzerland.

The first, on November 20, 1942, involved a daylight rope climb down a prison air shaft, accompanied by a French officer. The two successfully left the castle through an unguarded gate, casually sauntered through the park bordering the prison, and parted company outside, the Frenchman bound for Leipzig, Sinclair for the Swiss border. Three days later, after an Allied air raid had sparked a determined search for enemy parachutists, the Red Fox was caught near Singen, Germany, only a half-mile from freedom.

Sinclair's most daring attempt, one which revealed both his gambler's courage and his sacrificial devotion to his fellow prisoners, took place on May 19, 1943. Disguised as a German guard commander nicknamed "Franz Josef" by the prisoners, Sinclair and two other German-speaking POWs climbed down a homemade rope into the prison courtyard. The three intended to impersonate the regular guards, relieve them of duty and open a prison gate for 20 other inmates. The plan only misfired at the last minute when one of the original guards stolidly refused to leave his post.

In his guise as "Franz Josef," Sinclair wasted precious time arguing with the guard, instead of leaving the

the infantry regiment already in town. The SS soldiers, about 800, brought with them truckloads of the tank-busting *Panzerfausts*, which they distributed among the *Volkssturm*. They also had a few 88mm antiaircraft guns, which were deployed along the ridge above the castle. These 88s probably came from the Leipzig area, where a concentrated belt of flak guns protected various German oil refineries.

Sometime during the following 72 hours, the SS troops went to a concentration camp two miles south of Colditz. There they murdered 400 Hungarian Jews who were being used as slave laborers. Four of the Jews managed to survive by crawling under the bodies of the dead.

Prawitt woke to the ringing of the telephone on the morning of April 14. Glauchau gave him the code letters "ZR." This meant *Zerstorung-Raumung* (destroy-evacuate); camp guards were to destroy all records, stores, and warning systems. Furthermore, all prisoners were to be moved east on any available transport. The castle was equipped with one antique motor car and two horse-drawn carts, but Prawitt was determined to follow orders. After he sent for Tod at 6 a.m., Tod and Duke arrived in the *Kommandantur* prepared to counter Prawitt's argument at all costs.

The *Kommandant* informed Tod that he had to be ready to move his men in three hours. Tod refused, arguing that the men did not have enough physical strength to march cross-country. Prawitt stressed that he was under orders from his superiors. The American officer, Duke, said the prisoners had been waiting for liberation for a long time, and with freedom only a matter of hours away, nothing would force them out of Colditz. Prawitt remained steadfast. Tod then asked him to call headquarters and tell them

Members of the German staff appointed to guard the POWs held at Colditz pose with a cache of food the prisoners had hoarded in preparation for an escape attempt.

the prisoners would not move without force. The phone conversation was short. Prawitt could not get anyone at headquarters to take responsibility for the consequences of a forced move, so he courageously decided to ignore his early-morning order.

During mid-morning, a new sign of war appeared. A watcher among the prisoners spotted American Thunderbolt fighter planes to the southwest. Twenty prisoners immediately dashed down into the courtyard and spelled out the letters "P-O-W" on the black cobblestones with sheets, blankets, and shirts. No sooner were they finished than one of the planes flew directly over the castle. The prisoners waved, cheered, jumped, and ran around in circles. They could clearly see the pilot's goggled head, and hoped that he, in turn, had recognized them.

In the afternoon, as the outskirts of town were being hit by artillery fire, Tod and Duke again went to see the *Kommandant*. They feared that the SS might seize the castle because of its obvious military importance. Tod suggested the German garrison surrender to its prisoners. At first Prawitt refused, but after long debate (and reasoned consideration of his legal position in post-war Germany), he agreed to hand over responsibility for discipline within the camp to senior POW officers. Prawitt gave keys to the weapons and ammunition storage to Tod and Duke; the Allied officers agreed not to use them unless there was real danger the SS would try to occupy the prison. In that event, the prisoners would break out the weapons and distribute them among themselves while disarming the guards and taking them prisoner. To avoid arousing suspicion among the nearby SS, prison guards would remain at their posts; everything would appear normal from the outside. Prawitt gave his men orders not to fire upon prisoners or approaching American soldiers. The *Kommandant* prudently insisted that no national flags or white flags of surrender be hung out the windows of the castle.

Prawitt also demanded compensation for his surrender to unarmed prisoners of war. Tod and Duke signed a safe-

prison on his own. Not content to escape alone, Sinclair was determined to carry through with the original plan. After several minutes of wrangling, the real "Franz Josef" appeared with a contingent of soldiers. In the confusing mêlée which followed, Sinclair was shot in the chest at pointblank range by a frightened guard. Miraculously, the bullet glanced off his ribs and he survived with only a flesh wound.

In November 1943, Sinclair again managed to get clear away, dropping over a sheer parapet at the castle with a second prisoner, Jack Best. They then cut their way through strands of concertina wire at the foot of the prison. Three days later, the two were walking down the main street in Reine, Germany, when they were spotted by a policeman who felt Best did not look enough like a German. The escapees were then just 22 miles from the Swiss border.

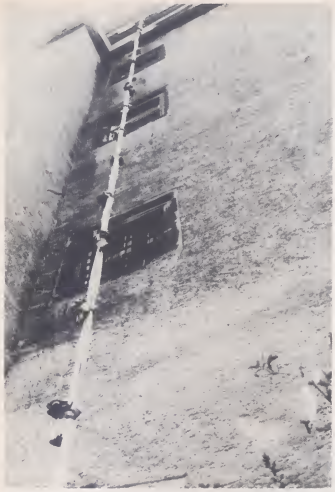
Escape had now become an obsession for Sinclair, and his single-mindedness caused other prisoners to worry about his safety. By the summer of 1944, it was clear that the war was nearing its end; escape from Colditz was virtually meaningless.

But on September 25, 1944, the Red Fox made one last attempt. This time, he was going alone. In the exercise yard, Sinclair turned suddenly to a companion, took his hand and said, "It's going to be now or never." Then, before his friend could say anything, Sinclair ran to the wire fence surrounding the yard and began clawing his way over the barbed wire. German guards, who had become accustomed to *Der Rote Fuch*'s audacious escapes, were thunderstruck by this suicidal and unimaginative attempt.

As Sinclair reached the top of the fence and balanced atop the swaying wires, sentries began shouting, "Halt! Halt! *Halt oder ich schiesse!*" Sinclair made the nine-foot drop and began stumbling uphill toward the outer wall. A volley of shots spattered around him. Disdaining this last opportunity to surrender, he kept on.

The German sentries fired another volley. One bullet glanced off Sinclair's elbow and entered his heart. At the age of 26, he was dead when the guards reached him.

At a memorial service held in his honor at Colditz chapel, shortly after the war ended seven months later, the prison chaplain paid tribute to the Red Fox's indomitable courage. "Whenever the story of escaping in this war is written," he said, "Mike Sinclair's name will be there, high up on the list."



TOP: Two Allied officers housed at Colditz were caught—in midair—while using this rope of bed linen in an escape attempt from the castle's guardhouse. ABOVE: Four officers held at Colditz escaped through this hole fashioned beneath the stage of the POW "theatre" at the castle. Two of the escapees made it all the way to freedom.

conduct agreement, and agreed to exonerate the Germans from any complaints of alleged violations of the Geneva Convention governing correct treatment of prisoners of war—with two exceptions. The first was the killing of British Lieutenant Michael Sinclair while he was attempting to escape on September 25, 1944. Tod and Duke demanded a full investigation after liberation, with no clemency to be shown to any found guilty of violating the military code. The second was responsibility for the safety of the *Prominente*. If they suffered any harm prior to their safe liberation, Prawitt and his staff would be held responsible. That afternoon, Security Chief Eggers handed over to the British prisoners 1,400 personal items of property that were confiscated upon their arrival at the camp. In the evening, he burned all the papers and official files of the *Kommandantur*, an event which took some seven hours.

April 15 was clear and sunny. There was great activity in the town of Colditz. German soldiers and *Volkssturm* deployed their machine guns and prepared for battle. American Thunderbolts reappeared and began strafing various strongpoints within the town. The Germans had no antiaircraft protection from the planes; the SS chose to save their 88mm ammunition for approaching American armor. At 10:30, the prisoners spotted tanks due west of town; but as the tanks approached they were recognized as German. The Thunderbolt pilots also saw the column and dive-bombed the tanks. Since each pull-out and turn required several minutes, the tanks in the interim moved forward into the protection of Colditz's narrow streets. One by one, the vehicles crossed the town bridge, evading the continuous attacks of American fighters.

Around two in the afternoon, a half-dozen American Sherman tanks entered the open fields two miles west of the castle and began firing into German machine-gun positions on the outskirts of town. This attracted the attention of the SS on the ridge behind the castle. The 88s opened up on the American tanks, but their aim was poor, and several rounds fell on the town, killing many German defenders. The SS reluctantly stopped firing after realizing what was happening.

A few minutes after the 88s ceased fire, a dozen men in *Waffen* SS uniforms, along with some *Volkssturm*, crossed the ancient bridge and climbed down the riverbank below the castle. A few minutes later there was a tremendous explosion as they detonated the ammunition placed under the bridge three days before. But the bridge, amazingly, remained standing. The soldiers began blasting the center piling of the bridge with *Panzerfausts*. The firing went on for about an hour, but the Germans finally gave up—leaving more than half the central piling still intact.

Colditz was soon within range of the advancing American artillery. The first rounds fell short, but the second skimmed the roof. British artillery officers in camp were alarmed: they knew the Americans were registering on the castle. The next rounds proved they were right; one hit the *Kommandantur*, killing a German corporal, another burst in mid-air over the prisoners' courtyard, wounding a French prisoner.

Lieutenant Kenneth B. Dodson of the 73rd Armored Field Battalion, Ninth Armored Division, in charge of the barrage, intended to destroy the castle in order to flush out German tanks suspected of hiding within its walls. Soon, however, Dodson received reports that spotters had seen French and British flags hanging from the castle windows. He delayed bombardment and informed his superior officer, Colonel Leo W. H. Shaughnessey, commander of Combat Command Reserve of the Ninth Armored Division. Shaughnessey immediately instructed Dodson to direct his fire on the hills beyond, but to preserve the castle at all

costs. "Do not—repeat not—shell castle which contains P.O.W.," he ordered.

For the rest of the day and into the night, the SS on the ridge east of the camp traded artillery fire with the Americans on the plain west of Colditz. During this duel, American infantrymen slowly pushed their way into town. The prisoners suffered from this all-night exchange; the noise was deafening, the concussions bone-shaking. Prisoners and guards alike were helplessly trapped inside the castle. By 2 a.m., April 16, the artillery contest finally subsided, replaced by a steady sound of machine guns and small-arms fire. This meant that American infantry had crossed the river and was on the castle side.

Captain Guy Nunn was one of five American prisoners at Colditz. At three in the morning, Prawitt, increasingly desperate, chose him to leave the castle, contact approaching American troops, and lead them back to the prison to accept its surrender. Nunn knew he would not be able to contact any of his fellow countrymen in the dark, so he waited until dawn before going out the main gate. Instantly, he was greeted by a burst of machine-gun fire. Nunn threw himself to the ground, ruefully reminded that he was in a combat situation, and crawled down the causeway crossing the dry castle moat and leading into town. There, he peered around the corner of a building and spotted two figures moving slowly up the street from one doorway to another. Nunn waited until he could make out their helmets in the dim light. After a moment, he knew—they were American GIs.

Joyfully, he whistled at them. They froze. He yelled that he was an American prisoner of war. The two GIs doubted his identity. They were advance scouts from their company, they knew there were no other Americans ahead of them. One of the soldiers had just killed a ten-year-old Hitler Youth member when the boy shot a GI from ambush, so they were ready for any tricks. No American-speaking Nazi would lead them into a trap.

Captain Nunn felt their suspicion. "This is kosher!" he yelled. It was a stroke of genius. No Nazi would use a Jewish word like "kosher," not even as a trick.

One of the GIs cautiously came forward in a crouch, the other following him. Nunn stood up, holding his arms high and wide. The two soldiers recognized his uniform and followed him up the road to the castle. The Americans looked frightening, faces smeared with lampblack, bayonets fixed, grenades hanging from their uniforms. As soon as the three were inside the gate, one of the soldiers went into a guard-box and emerged with a framed picture of Adolf Hitler. Raising the portrait above his head, he smashed it to the cobblestones and ground it under his bootheel. A roar of cheers went up from the prisoners' windows in the castle. With that simple gesture they knew that they were finally free, that all the waiting and suffering had paid off—Liberation!

A British officer standing near the gate now came forward, taking one soldier's outstretched hand. "Any GIs here?" the soldier asked affably. In seconds, a mob of now-former prisoners of war rushed into the courtyard, surrounding the soldiers, weeping, laughing, and clapping each other on the back. Frenchmen joyfully embraced, kissing each other on the cheek with tears streaming down their faces.

In short order, the Americans disarmed the acquiescent German guards. Colonel Shaughnessy arrived later to formally accept surrender of the castle and its garrison. Tod, as senior POW, proposed that all prisoners except those with special duties be kept within the castle for the time being, to allow them to readjust to freedom and to avoid Nazi suicide parties which Shaughnessy warned were still swarming the countryside. (Three Frenchmen who subsequently disobeyed the order were recaptured by the Germans and disappeared.)

The camera views part of an escape tunnel the POWs at Colditz dug before prospects of liberation diverted them from their relentless attempts at escape.

The next two days were spent collecting all the accumulated possessions of five years' imprisonment and moving these behind the lines to safety. Within two days of liberation, the ex-prisoners were on their way to England. The castle was occupied by American troops from the 9th Armored and 69th Infantry Divisions, which in turn were forced to abandon Colditz in July 1945, because the castle was located in the region by then designated as the Soviet occupation zone. Later, the castle was used as a hospital for Soviet officers suffering from venereal disease. In 1949, now part of newly created East Germany, Colditz returned to its unhappy function of insane asylum.

By then, the thousands of British, American, and other Allied POWs who had suffered, endured, and persevered within Colditz's forbidding walls had long since returned to civilian life. On the day of his return to England, British Captain Dick Howe arrived at Kaledar airfield, near Chemnitz, riding a German Army motorcycle he had somehow commandeered at Colditz. With his fellow-prisoners now boarding American-made Dakotas for the short flight home, Howe took one last ride aboard his BMW cycle. Spying a GI emerging from a hut at the edge of the airfield, Howe raced over to him. "Hey!" he shouted, "can you ride a motorbike?" "Yeah," the American replied. "Well, you've got one," Howe told him, hurrying off to catch his plane. On board, he looked out and saw the GI slowly walking around the cycle like a child on Christmas morning. Howe had already received his Christmas present. He was going home □

Eric Narveson teaches history at a junior high school in Fremont, Calif. The subject of his master's degree thesis was a history of the Colditz camp. He recommends for further reading Colditz: The German Side of the Story *by Reinhold Eggers and* Escape from Colditz *by Patrick R. Reid.*

Undercover In Occupied Rome

With the Salerno invasion just hours away, every moment two American officers spent in occupied Rome would count. They had to make the contacts, get the information . . . and decide if there also should be an airborne assault on Rome itself.

By Mark Sufrin

At noon on September 8, 1943, two American Army officers wearing civilian clothes slipped from their hideout in Rome into the streets of the German-occupied city. Smuggled into Italy the day before, Brigadier General Maxwell Taylor and Colonel William Gardiner walked unnoticed through crowds rushing home for lunch. The only Germans they saw in the first minutes were three young soldiers window-shopping.

Two big cars suddenly roared past and blocked off the street behind them. Taylor saw eight men in civilian clothes, weapons drawn, herd a group of people into an arcade. He knew they were Germans, probably Gestapo, and he noticed that no one else on the street openly watched the roundup.

Both Americans turned slowly and walked away. Taylor realized how vulnerable they were: they had no identification papers, neither spoke good Italian, and they carried pistols and American watches. A couple of fumbling amateurs playing cloak and dagger, he thought. One mistake—and they would have sprung a trap on thousands of American troops.

Taylor and Gardiner knew when and where the American Fifth Army would invade Italy, and when U.S. paratroopers would drop on Rome. If they were taken prisoner and tortured, Taylor didn't know how long he could hold out. He glanced at Gardiner. Who knew when another man would break? He remembered the casual advice of British General Harold Alexander in his briefing just hours before: *If you're captured, I'd do something about*

As depicted by wartime artist Walter Preiss, a German truck convoy in Italy comes under attack by American fighter planes in Italy sometime in 1944. Although Italy formally surrendered to the Allies on the eve of the Salerno invasion, German forces in Italy fought on to war's end.

As indicated by the map, the Allied strategy for the conquest of southern Italy and the liberation of Rome was one of several steps, most of them difficult. The road to Rome began with the invasion of Sicily July 10, 1943 (bottom), which was followed in early September by the crossing of the Strait of Messina and landings at Reggio Calabria. Although Italy formally surrendered September 8, German forces rushed south to "plug the line" against expected Allied thrusts. These came September 9 at Taranto (Operation SLAPSTICK) and at Salerno (Operation AVALANCHE), followed later by the Anzio (Operation SHINGLE) amphibious assault above Salerno. The first Allied units entered Rome June 4, 1944, but only after stiff opposition by the Germans at the major beachheads and along their Gustav Line protecting Rome. Above Rome, however, there lay even more difficult fighting and the stoutly defended Gothic Line of German defenses.

it. Taylor decided it would be necessary to kill Gardiner and himself if they were taken.

Still walking, they watched a German convoy roll along the Via Impero, troops taking over the defenses of Rome. Taylor calculated that more than 5,000 men would have passed that corner in a half-hour's time.

The Americans took a streetcar to the city's outskirts. Near the end of the line, Taylor saw strong fortifications, machine-gun pillboxes and artillery emplacements enclosed by barbed wire. The streetcar approached a German checkpoint, and soldiers came on the run. Taylor and Gardiner stayed low and jumped off before the car stopped. No Italian aboard gave the alarm. They dropped into a ditch behind some concrete caissons and started running. Gardiner went down and they stayed pressed against the embankment. There was a clattering sound. The Germans had finished their check and the streetcar was returning. They scrambled out of the ditch and ran for the car. The conductor saw them and signaled to the motorman. The car slowed and the Americans swung aboard. No one looked at them all the way into the city. They got off, walked southeast and passed dozens of armed patrols. Along the Via Firenze, Taylor stopped to look at a fountain. Gardiner spotted two SS officers far up the street and nudged Taylor.

"That's called the Fountain of San Bernardo," said Taylor casually. "It was on the cover of my high school art textbook." He was smiling, but aware of the approaching Germans. When the SS officers were a few yards away, he shouted, "*Buono giorno.*" They returned the greeting in German with a curt nod and passed on.

The Americans turned into Via 20 Settembre. Gardiner started to talk, but Taylor hissed a warning. Out of the corner of his eye Gardiner saw the SS officers watching them. The two Americans saw their hideout at the far end of the street and had to restrain themselves from breaking into a run. They reached the entrance and rushed through the vaulted courtyard into the building. Taylor suddenly realized how frightened he was. The walk through Rome had not been a wise move. It had been foolish to expose themselves to capture—too much depended on their mission. They were walking a tightrope of strategic and geopolitical developments as it was.

tegic and geopolitical developments as it was.

On September 3, 1943, the Italian government had signed a secret armistice with the Allies, and the Allied timetable in the Mediterranean was then accelerated. General Dwight D. Eisenhower and his fellow Allied commanders in North Africa decided to mount Operation AVALANCHE—an assault on Salerno, 150 miles south of Rome—at 2:30 a.m., September 9, as the first massive invasion of Hitler's Fortress Europe.

The Italians, fearing destruction of Rome by the Germans in revenge for the armistice, offered the Allies troops and supplies if they would protect the city. A bold plan—called Operation GIANT II—was whipped into shape in two days:

At 6:30 p.m., September 8, eight hours before the Salerno invasion, 4,000 paratroopers of Taylor's own 82nd Airborne Division would take off from bases in Sicily to drop on airfields north of Rome.

The operation was designed to capture the city, cripple German communications and supply lines, split the enemy forces and ease pressure on American troops landing at Salerno, just below Naples. The plan had one big hitch: without Italian support it would be a slaughter. The Italians had to offer fast, strong reinforcements of troops and enough ammunition, gas and transport to keep the paratroopers mobile and fighting for at least three days.

The Allies were risking elite troops for the jump on Rome. General Eisenhower knew the slightest hesitation or false move by the Italians would betray the plan to the Germans. It was too soon after the armistice to trust them . . . it might be a trick. He needed a tough, resourceful agent to go into Italy, to decide whether the offer of support was reliable, then to act as liaison to coordinate the attack. Eisenhower decided on a high-ranked, aggressive combat officer from one of the paratrooper outfits. The agent had to be disciplined enough to maintain security, shrewd enough to cope with the twists and turns of Italian politics, and hardy enough for the physical demands of the mission. Only one man qualified: Maxwell Taylor, Chief of Staff of the 82nd Airborne, a man Eisenhower thought was marked for greatness.

Born in 1901, Taylor, an aloof, handsome man, already was marked as one of the Army's young elite officers. Graduated from West Point as fourth in his class of 1922, he was a fine athlete and soldier, an intellectual, a student

of history and fluent in Japanese, German, French and Spanish. A top engineer and artillery expert, Taylor was promoted to brigadier general in 1942. He helped form the Army's first airborne division and qualified as a paratrooper at the age of 40. In Sicily he had proved himself a superb battle commander and tactician.

To accompany Taylor, Eisenhower picked Colonel William Gardiner, a 53-year-old intelligence officer from the 51st Troop Carrier Wing, the outfit that would carry the paratroopers to Rome. A thickset, Harvard-educated lawyer and an ex-Governor of Maine, he did not seem a likely candidate for a secret mission. But the calm, pipe-smoking Gardiner was to prove the perfect foil for the brilliant General Taylor.

They were briefed in Sicily by Harold Alexander, the British General commanding the Mediterranean Theater:

"Primarily, you must insure Italian cooperation for the drop. You're to make an estimate of the situation and advise by radio. If there is the smallest chance of failure—cancel the operation immediately. If the airborne assault is made—you are to wait in Rome and join up with the troops when they break into the city.

"Second—to give the operation every margin of success—and to keep Italian troops from automatically fighting with the Germans at Salerno—General Eisenhower and Marshal Badoglio [successor to the deposed Mussolini] must proclaim the armistice at the moment the planes jump off. Badoglio may refuse. It's your job to see that he follows orders.

"It would make your job easier if the Italians knew of the invasion. They might be more willing to cooperate. But under no circumstances—repeat, *no circumstances*—are you to trust them with the information. It could possibly trap and kill thousands of our men."

The aristocratic British officer had paused. "You're going to run enormous risks. I must limit your exposure to the Germans and can't let you start until the morning of September 7. This leaves you less than two days. But if you're captured too long before zero hour, the plan might be revealed—and a division lost."

Taylor understood Alexander: *If you're tortured and break* . . . . Then, almost as an afterthought, Alexander said, "Our agents in Europe tell us that the Germans have a truth drug." He ran a finger along his moustache. "If you're captured, I'd do something about it."

Outside the office, Gardiner laughed. "I gather we are able, clever, daring, important—but expendable."

"That's what he meant." Taylor realized that Alexander had told them nothing of how they were to escape from Italy if the air drop were called off.

At 4 a.m. on September 7, the two officers, carrying suitcases and an attache case, boarded a British PT boat in the harbor at Palermo, Sicily. Taylor glanced at his watch. He had 39 hours. The boat headed for a rendezvous with the Italian corvette *Ibis* off the island of Ustica, 45 miles northwest of Sicily. The light was dim, and Taylor knew they might be spotted by German air patrols or a submarine. Both men were armed. Gardiner carried a .45 Colt, Taylor a 9mm Brixia he'd taken from a prisoner in Sicily and preferred to the heavier weapon. They wore uniforms and field jackets to give the appearance of regular combat officers if the Germans captured them—Taylor in jump boots and battle dress, Gardiner in khaki shirt and pants.

They reached Ustica at 6 a.m. and transferred to the Italian corvette in a heavy sea. The Americans were greeted by Admiral Franco Maugeri, the chief of Italian Naval Intelligence. He had the touchy job of getting them into Rome. As the corvette headed for the Italian mainland, 200 miles off, Taylor was on the bridge deck with

British Tommies man an observation post in a ruined house in the Salerno area shortly after the Allied invasion of the Italian west coast on September 9, 1943. While U.S. personnel of the Allied Fifth Army drove inland on the right, or southern flank, the British X Corps on the left (northern) flank captured Salerno itself.

Maugeri, who said they might run into bad weather or "other complications." Possibly, they would have to cruise for several days.

Taylor knew Maugeri was probing for information. He had to be careful. "My orders, Admiral, are to be in Rome tonight to contact your people. No matter what happens—proceed on course."

"We will put in at the port of Gaeta, 75 miles south of Rome," Maugeri said. "There is less inspection and delay, fewer Germans around the docks. To avoid suspicion if they have men there and see you, I'm informing Supermarina in Rome at 11 a.m. that I've picked up two American officers from a disabled plane forced down at sea. This has happened, and since the Germans tap our lines, it will make everything look routine."

Four sailors approached with pails of water. "With your permission," Maugeri said, "it will give your uniforms the look of having been in the sea and drying during the trip." Taylor and Gardiner closed their eyes and the sailors heaved the water.

They were standing in the warming sun when a German ME-410 reconnaissance bomber came in from the east. For their purposes it was now a friendly plane and they relaxed. The plane circled the ship twice, then made for the coast. At mid-afternoon, a flight of American A-20 attack bombers was sighted. Taylor figured they were safe. Every Air Corps unit in the area had been alerted to the presence of the corvette in those waters. He thought the bombers were heading to Volturno to pound roads and bridges leading to Rome and wouldn't delay for a stray target—even if they didn't know the Italian corvette was "untouchable."

But one plane broke formation and made a run on the ship. The Italian gunners opened fire as the corvette began to fishtail. The first bomb splashed far astern, then flak tore into the plane and Taylor watched it spin and plummet into the sea. He could only feel a moment of pity for the dead men.

They reached Gaeta at 5:30 p.m. Before the ship docked, Taylor and Gardiner shoved their caps out of sight, mussed their hair, threw away the gun holsters and

A U.S. 155mm gun fires off a round at German forces defending against further Allied incursion at the Anzio beachhead.

jammed the weapons and ammo clips into the waistband under their shirts. Gardiner pulled his tie loose and tore off some shirt buttons. Maugeri spoke to the six armed sailors guarding them:

"You won't understand, but these Americans have come to help our country. What you've seen will seem strange, but you'll get an explanation later. To prevent any slip in security, you'll be kept at Ponta Costa in Sardinia until further notice. There will be no liberty."

Maugeri then told them to treat the "prisoners" roughly. "A few smashes with rifle butts won't hurt."

He turned to the Americans. "The Gestapo watch every ship. Get my men mad enough to hit you. But too much fight will be suspicious."

The sailors prodded the two men down the gangplank. Taylor shuffled, resisting, and a sailor kept jabbing his neck and shoulders with the rifle. One Italian was carried away by the game and slammed his weapon into Gardiner's kidney. The Colonel threw a punch and floored the sailor. Another guard crashed his rifle butt into Gardiner's head and he went down, bleeding. The sailors dragged him ashore. One of Maugeri's officers supervised the unloading of the luggage—each suitcase contained a powerful, compact radio.

The Americans were hustled into a naval staff car with Maugeri and two other officers. An armed guard rode with the driver, and two marines on motorcycles rode escort. The car sped up the Appian Way to Rome. Three miles from Gaeta, however, the driver turned into a side road, where an Italian naval ambulance was hidden in a grove of trees. Taylor, Gardiner and Maugeri jumped into the rear, along with two armed marines to make the continuing ruse look real if the Germans stopped them. One of Maugeri's junior officers sat up front. The ambulance cut back onto the highway and raced toward Rome. Taylor turned to compliment Maugeri on his arrangements and the thus-far perfect timing.

"It is intrigue," shrugged the Italian. "We love it."

Taylor peered through the window, anxious to spot German defenses. At first he saw only scattered groups of soldiers—he began to feel optimistic about the air drop. But halfway to Rome, the German buildup became evident. In one short stretch they hit a dozen roadblocks; the ambulance passed with no trouble. Taylor counted six battalions of armored infantry, and once they were forced off the road to wait while two batteries of 88mm artillery swung past. Signs in German pointed to the location of various units in the area. Taylor figured there were probably 10,000 troops bivouacked within a few miles. Traffic grew heavy and the ambulance crawled. The officer in the cab opened the connecting window:

"Checkpoint ahead. SS troops are inspecting every third vehicle . . . looks like we're going to be stopped."

"How far are we from Rome?" Taylor asked.

"About three miles," Maugeri said. "But forget any idea about jumping out." He pointed toward the rear. The next two vehicles in line were German command cars.

At the checkpoint, an SS lieutenant with a fat puckish face waited as a soldier pulled the rear door open. He glanced at Taylor and Gardiner, but seemed more surprised to see an Italian admiral riding the improvised seat:

"Where are the sick men?"

Maugeri spoke in halting German. "This was the only vehicle . . . these are prisoners picked up at sea." But he couldn't make himself understood. The officer ordered his soldiers to pull the Americans out. Maugeri spoke in Italian, pointing to his insignia of rank, but was ignored. Taylor had to gamble—he decided to address the SS officer in German:

"We are combat officers. Flying from Sicily to North Africa, our plane crashed into the sea and we were taken prisoner. The Admiral told us we are being taken to Rome for interrogation."

The officer showed no surprise at Taylor's fluency. He gestured to Maugeri. "These clowns . . . I think it's better you come with us."

"Under the circumstances we have no choice," Taylor said. "But there's one thing. The Admiral saved our lives. It seems a pity to embarrass him further. The Italians are already disgraced in the war."

The SS officer laughed. "The worst thing we ever did was let them fight with us. They're worse than women. You should be fighting with the Germans—against Russia."

Taylor agreed. The officer complimented him on his German, leaned in to pat him on the shoulder—and spotted the star on Taylor's jacket. He looked at the American's face, then dropped his eyes slowly to examine the battle dress and jump boots. He stood with hands on hips and stared at Taylor for a long time, then finally waved the ambulance on.

"It was foolish," Maugeri said, "an American general who speaks German that well. It made him too curious."

"No, it saved us. You should have had an interpreter along."

"Having an interpreter on a combat ship would have made this look too staged." Maugeri paused. "By the way, I speak German quite well. I don't think you believe what you said about Italy."

Taylor shook his head. "No. You are brave men."

They reached Rome at nightfall and drove toward

British Tommies appear alert here as their Bren-gun carrier maneuvers through the shattered streets of Salerno on September 18, 1943, nine days after the Allied landing at the west coast town.

Supermarina headquarters as a feint. Satisfied the Germans weren't tailing them, Maugeri ordered the driver to the Caprera Palace, an elegant building next to the Italian War Office, where the Americans would hide out. Maugeri introduced them to Colonel Marco Salvi, chief of staff to General Giacomo Carboni, commandant of the Rome area—Taylor's contact to arrange the air drop.

"I leave you now," Maugeri said. "Remember, don't press your business here too direct. In Italy we are all bargainers from the cradle—and intriguers."

Taylor asked to see General Carboni, but Colonel Salvi said Carboni was away; Salvi didn't know when he would return.

"His orders were to meet us on arrival," Taylor said.

"He will be here. In the meantime there is a dinner in your honor. You can clean up and rest in your quarters."

The air drop on Rome was 20 hours off—the invasion of Salerno to come only 8 hours later—when the Americans sat down to dinner. Taylor, furious at the waste of time, suddenly rose from his seat.

"I want to see General Carboni. *Now*. Do you understand?"

Salvi said the General would be along presently.

"Not presently. *Now!*"

Salvi left the room. Within 15 minutes, Carboni appeared, a tall, sleek, bored-looking man. "Ah, General, I've just arrived."

Taylor saw the look of sleep in the man's eyes and knew he'd been in the palace all the time—while two precious hours were lost. Taylor wasted no time:

"We must know immediately if you can support the air drop. The planes will be guided in by radio beacon and Aldis lamp from a British submarine as far as the mouth of the Tiber. Do you have beacons at the airfields to bring them in? Can you defend the airfields with your own troops and keep our men supplied? There's little time to coordinate this. I need quick answers."

Carboni shook his head. "The paratroop assault must be called off. It will be a massacre. Since the armistice was signed, the situation has changed too fast. The Germans have crippled our army, slowed all supplies. We have nothing left to fight with, let alone supply your men."

"Can you hold the Germans long enough for the 82nd to land? Just that long? The operation can still succeed."

"You dream of glory—but the Germans control Rome now. They've moved many units in . . . the 2nd Parachute Division, 12,000 men only ten miles from the airfields you will use . . . the 16th and 29th *Panzer Grenadier* Division, over 40,000 men dug in around Rome. They have 400 tanks and many pieces of 88mm and antiaircraft. SS units encircle the city in the inner ring. More troops arrive in Italy every day."

Carboni lit a cigarette. "If you insist on going through with the operation, you will be murdering men who never had a chance from the start."

Taylor knew Carboni might agree to fight if he knew the time of the Salerno invasion. With thousands of Allied soldiers on the Italian mainland, the German defenses split north and south—even this frightened man might gamble. But Taylor's orders were firm: *Under no circumstances are you to trust the Italians with the information* . . . It was 11:30 p.m.—only 19 hours until the planes took off for Rome.

Initial elements of the 82nd Airborne by now had been loaded into four landing craft as a small reserve force and

already would be heading for the mouth of the Tiber River. Even if he could convince Carboni to fight, Taylor knew, the Italian support would be halfhearted, worse than nothing. He began to think the planned airdrop operation was hopeless, but he had to salvage something from the mission—he told Carboni about the arrangements for announcing the armistice.

"It will have to be postponed," Carboni said. "The Germans will destroy Rome out of revenge. You don't know what they're capable of. They'll kill Marshal Badoglio. I'm sorry, but this is all better forgotten."

Taylor demanded to see Badoglio. There *had* to be an announcement, or Italian troops would automatically fight with the Germans at Salerno.

"It's impossible. He is an old man, he cannot be disturbed."

Taylor was through trying to convince Carboni. He pulled his pistol. "I must see him—and I'll kill you if you don't help."

Carboni glanced at the pistol, then stared into Taylor's eyes. "I think you would. I'll take you."

"Don't make a sound when we leave," ordered Taylor. "Don't say goodnight. Don't open your mouth. Just wave if anyone sees us."

They went into the dark street and climbed into a staff car. Taylor sat next to Carboni and kept his weapon pressed against the man's body. They reached Marshal Pietro Badoglio's villa after midnight. He was awakened and greeted the Americans. Taylor noted that Italian support was needed for the air drop but that Carboni was obviously reluctant.

"But I agree with him—to the letter," the 72-year-old Badoglio said. "And I cannot announce the armistice. I need more time to complete preparations, alert my field commanders, pull troops to defensible positions, transfer ships . . ." He wiped his forehead. "There are still so many things to do, move supplies and records." He held his hands up in a gesture of helplessness.

Taylor knew he was stalling, trying to find out the time and place of the invasion. "I can't postpone anything. I don't have the authority."

"If you force me," Badoglio said, his eyes clouding with tears, "I will do what you say. But the Germans will cut my throat the next day." His eyes turned shrewd. "If I knew where the invasion was—Salerno, perhaps—I might give valuable assistance."

Taylor was adamant. "You want to cancel an air drop because you say the Germans are too strong and you have no supplies. Then you say you can give valuable help to an invasion. How?"

Taylor went on without waiting for an answer. "Your railroads and communications are ruined by our air strikes, and it will get worse as long as the Germans hold Italy and you don't come in on our side. Who are you more afraid of—us or the Germans?"

Badoglio thought for a few minutes, then accepted Taylor's suggestion that he radio Algiers and explain himself to General Eisenhower. At this point, Taylor sent his first transmission: "In view of Marshal Badoglio's statement as to inability to declare armistice and guarantee fields—Operation GIANT II is impossible. Reasons given for change are irreplaceable lack of gasoline and munitions and new German dispositions. Badoglio requests Taylor return to present Italian government's views. Taylor and Gardiner awaiting instructions. Acknowledge." The time now was 1:21 a.m., September 8.

Taylor and Gardiner returned to the Caprera Palace at 3 a.m. Exhausted, they tried to sleep, but their nerves were tight. Taylor waited hours, then checked to see if there was any reply from Algiers. The Italian radio operator shook his head.

"When did my message go out?"

"It took a long time. I had to encode by hand. The machine was broken."

"What time?" Taylor insisted.

The operator didn't look at Taylor. "At 5:58 this morning."

That was almost five hours after Taylor filed it.

Allied headquarters in Algiers didn't receive the message until 7:21 a.m. Taylor received an acknowledgement of his transmission at 8:36 a.m. The reply said nothing more. His message didn't reach Eisenhower's advanced headquarters in Tunis until 11 a.m.

When the confirmation came in from Algiers, Taylor wondered whether his first message had been strong enough to convince Eisenhower to cancel the air drop. At 8:42 a.m. he filed a second, detailing the tactical situation, and ended:

"Airborne troops not wanted at present as their arrival would bring immediate German attack on Rome. Source of views Marshal Badoglio and General Carboni."

By 11:35 a.m. there was no reply from Allied headquarters to Taylor's urgent message advising against the airborne assault. He had only seven more hours to stop the planes. He sent a two-word message: "Situation innocuous." It was Taylor's last hope—a code phrase to cancel the operation. It was final—automatic.

Taylor and Gardiner couldn't stand the wait, and that was when they went into the streets of Rome to observe German troops and defenses within the city and on the outskirts—intelligence that would be vital to troops fighting up the Italian peninsula from Salerno. The pair had brushes with SS officers and patrols but got back safely at 3:30 p.m., just as Carboni rushed in with a transmission from Algiers:

"You will return to Allied headquarters. Passage by air arranged. Your plane will not be fired on by Allied aircraft or antiaircraft."

Implicit in the message was what Taylor had been waiting for—the airborne assault at Rome was cancelled.

"You're going to leave in ten minutes for Centoselle airfield," Carboni said. "There will be two passengers with you. General Rossi is going to North Africa to act as liaison with the Allies and is taking his interpreter. I won't see you again. Good luck."

The same ambulance that brought them to Rome was waiting. Beyond the city they had to detour around a heavily-bombed railroad crossing. When they reached the main road again, the vehicle was stopped by German military police and waved to the side to allow two regiments of paratroopers to pass. There wasn't enough clearance for the marching columns, and the ambulance was ordered into the ditch, but the driver refused. Taylor suddenly felt the vehicle lurch . . . the paratroopers were trying to overturn it. Some pulled at the rear door but it was locked from the inside. Rossi's interpreter said they were only a half-mile from the airfield. Taylor shouted at the driver to pull away fast. He smashed the rear window with his pistol and fired at the nearest German.

The ambulance roared into Centoselle moments later, and they climbed aboard a waiting Savoia-Marchetti. As Taylor was being pulled aboard, he saw German command cars speeding toward the plane. He jumped down, fired twice at the lead vehicle, but the shots fell short. The Germans opened up with automatic fire and hit the fuselage. Gardiner and Rossi fired from the open hatch, shouting for Taylor to get in. Taylor emptied his clip at the nearest vehicle and was hauled aboard. The heavy plane

Awaiting evacuation from the fighting fronts of Italy are German wounded, their Junkers Ju-52 transports visible in the rear.

began to eat up ground. The engine cadence faltered for an instant, then blared into full power. Taylor turned to Gardiner:

"Do you think Carboni put the Germans on us?"

"No. He was a scared peacock, but no informer."

"Maybe the Gestapo had us fingered all the time and held off until they heard something." Taylor shrugged. "They waited about thirty seconds too long." It didn't matter anymore, he thought, the 82nd wouldn't be jumping into a massacre.

But until he landed, Taylor never knew how close it was.

General Eisenhower had received the automatic cancellation at 2:59 p.m. Top-priority messages were flashed to the 51st Troop Carrier headquarters at Licata, Sicily—but weren't received until 6 p.m. The transports, loaded and lined up on the runway, were stopped only 30 minutes before takeoff. The reserve section of the 82nd was halted at sea and diverted to Salerno, where the troopers landed with a U.S. Army Ranger battalion.

It was dusk when the Savoia-Marchetti touched down at El Aouina field at Tunis. An excited officer drove up in a jeep.

"Did you hear the news? Eisenhower announced Italy's surrender."

Taylor leaned out the hatch. "Anything from the Italians yet?"

"No."

Taylor jumped down. "Get me to a radio quick."

It was 6:46 p.m. He thought that Badoglio possibly had made a statement but that bad atmospherics prevented its reception.

Taylor waited in the radio shack with Gardiner and General Rossi for more than an hour. At 8 p.m.—an hour and a half late—Marshal Badoglio at last did proclaim the armistice, in effect taking Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. Taylor saw Rossi grow pale and shake his head. He wondered what the General would think if he knew the 5th Army was already standing off Salerno.

At 2:30 a.m., September 9, 1943, elements of the 36th Division hit the beach and drove inland—the first American troops to invade the European continent in World War II. (The British Eighth Army on smaller scale had landed at the tip of the Italian boot on September 3.)

Taylor later was decorated with the Silver Star by General Eisenhower, who then paid the parattrooper officer—and future Army Chief of Staff—this tribute:

"The risks he ran were greater than I asked any other agent or emissary to undertake during the war—he carried weighty responsibilities and discharged them with unerring judgement, and every minute was in imminent danger of discovery and death."

For the moment, though, Allied attention was focused upon the freshly launched Italian campaign. The decorations—and the ultimate liberation of Rome—would come in due time . . . but later, much later. □

A writer of both fiction and military history, Mark Sufrin served in the Pacific as an infantry officer. For further reading, he suggests The Race for Rome *by Dan Kurtzman and* The History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, *Vol. IX (Sicily, Salerno, Anzio), by Samuel Eliot Morison.*

First Test For War Machine

Rushing into the swirling vortex of civil war in Spain were forces from Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia. Germany, for one, soon found that its He-51 fighter plane was no match for the Russian Ilyushin Il-16. The answer was the Me Bf-109.

By Bruce R. Pirnie

In the late summer of 1936, one Max Winkler nearly could qualify as the most popular man in Germany. Dozens of letters arrived each week at his Berlin, S.W. 68, address, where they were put into new envelopes, franked and postmarked, and forwarded to other households throughout the country. Curiously, all the letters were from Spain, but no one in Adolf Hitler's Germany asked any questions, least of all the postmen delivering "Max Winkler's" mail. Questions even then were best left to the Gestapo—one did not want to attract their attention.

"Winkler," in fact, was the codename for "Special Staff W," Lt. Gen. Helmuth Wilberg's ultra-secret undercover organization which handled clandestine projects for the *Führer*. Wilberg, although half-Jewish himself and therefore prohibited from reporting directly to Hitler, had been chosen on the basis of his previous experience secretly training German pilots inside the Soviet Union in defiance of the much-hated Treaty of Versailles. Now, through Operation MAGIC FIRE, *Luftwaffe* pilots were being sent covertly to another country—suffering, strife-riven Spain—where their presence eventually would tip the scales in a horrific civil war and, not incidentally, provide them with invaluable hands-on experience when it came time to conduct another, even more terrible war.

By then, "Max Winkler" would have stopped receiving letters, and the whole world would know his "Spanish" friends by their unit designation—the Condor Legion.

Spain was not a modern society in 1936. In some ways, it seemed scarcely to have set foot in the 20th century. Its political life had long been dominated by the monarchy, the church, and the army, all heavily conservative institutions. Together, they defended traditional Spanish values

which centered on a fervid Catholicism of almost medieval intensity. The economy was still largely agrarian, and life in the countryside was dominated by large landowners. But Spain, in the mid-30's, was also a very turbulent nation; conservative forces were being challenged by left-wing elements, especially the increasingly militant workers in the great cities of Madrid and Barcelona. Despite conservative charges, few of these workers were communists by sympathy. Instead, in typical Spanish fashion, they tended to be anarchists, entranced by the dream of a classless, stateless, wholly-just society. Compared with these

Heroically depicted here, a mixed force of Nationalist rebels fights its way toward the San Marcial convent at the height of the Spanish Civil War, a pre-war testing ground for the military machines of Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia.

two extremes of Spanish life, enlightened liberals were a small, almost ineffectual minority. Worse yet, many of the Spanish middle class turned not to liberalism but to the *Falange*, a violently anti-communist movement with distinctly fascist tendencies.

In July 1936, the highly volatile Spanish nation exploded. King Alfonso XIII having abdicated five years earlier, Spain was now a republic, albeit a very precarious one, plagued by strikes, local uprisings and political murders. When the parliament, or *Cortes*, dissolved in January, left-wing elements formed a so-called Popular Front that won the ensuing election by a narrow margin. Street wars immediately erupted between the *Falange* and their rivals in communist and socialist youth groups. In March, the hard-pressed government banned the *Falange* and arrested its leaders. Spanish conservatives feared the government was not truly democratic, but actually intended to create a communist dictatorship over Spain.

Whenever the old order seemed threatened, the traditional Spanish reaction was a military coup. This time it began on July 17, 1936, in Spanish Morocco, under the leadership of General Francisco Franco and other disaf-

Artwork appearing in a Rome newspaper in 1936 depicts a scene in which the defenders of the Alcazar fortress at Toledo have foiled plans by the besieging Republicans to douse the fortifications with gasoline and set them on fire.

fected right-wing generals. Bookish, sway-backed, and almost effeminate in appearance, the 44-year-old Franco seemed an odd sort of man to lead a coup, but appearance in his case was deceptive. A former commander of the Spanish Foreign Legion, an elite unit notorious for its brutal conduct of Spain's colonial war against the Rif tribesmen of Spanish Morocco, Franco had trained in a very harsh school. "*Viva la Muerte*"—Long Live Death—was the Legion's motto; looting, raping, and mutilation were its sports. Franco himself had once shot dead a legionnaire for mocking his distinctive high-pitched voice.

The "Generals' Rising," as it came to be known, began a day earlier than originally planned, when a loyal Republican general in Melilla, Spanish Morocco, got wind of the plot. The Foreign Legion, assisted by its terrifying Moorish *regulares*—Rif tribesmen serving as Legion mercenaries—soon seized control of the entire African colony. Meanwhile, inside Spain, co-conspirators led uprisings at military outposts in Barcelona, Madrid, Seville and other major cities. Franco, who (for all practical purposes) had been exiled to Tenerife in the Canary Islands, was secretly flown to Morocco aboard a chartered plane. En route, he changed from his civilian disguise into a khaki uniform, complete with scarlet-and-gold general's sash. When fellow-general José Sanjurjo, the ranking rebel commander, was killed in a somewhat suspicious air crash while on his way from Portugal to take charge of the coup, Franco abruptly had inherited command of the Nationalist rebellion.

From the start, Franco faced daunting obstacles. In the nation's two largest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, improvised forces loyal to the government had quashed the attempted rebel takeover, massacring Nationalist troops in their barracks. Important coastal cities along the Mediter-

ranean also remained in loyal hands. Worse yet, senior naval officers expected to ferry the 30,000-man Army of Africa to the mainland had been killed by their Republic-minded crews. Without its chief fighting force, the rebellion at first seemed doomed to suicidal failure.

Franco at once approached fascist-controlled Italy and Germany for aid. On July 22 his emissaries spoke with Count Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian foreign minister. At first, Italian strongman Benito Mussolini was hesitant to assist the rebels; he had pledged to support the restoration of monarchy in Spain. When Franco's agents duly produced a fellow conspirator of monarchist sympathies, the Italians promised their support. Also on July 22, Franco appealed to the Germans through their military attaché in Paris and directly in a personal letter to Hitler.

Franco's emissaries reached Berlin on July 25, and there they spoke with Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, Nazi intelligence chief, who knew Spain well and favored intervention. The emissaries then continued to Bayreuth, where Hitler was enjoying a festival of his cherished Wagnerian opera. Appropriately enough, the evening's performance was *Die Walküre*. Without consulting his own foreign ministry, which he considered hopelessly timid and inept, Hitler immediately promised assistance. The *Führer* had his own reasons for aiding Franco. Besides wanting to stop the spread of communism, he was intrigued by Spain's strategic position at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. He also evinced an unusual interest in Spain's ironore. For his part, Nazi Air Marshal Hermann Goering favored intervention as a way for his young pilots to gain practical experience "in this or that technical respect."

Since the Spanish air force and navy had remained largely loyal to the Republic, putting Franco into an embarrassing position, his most reliable military forces temporarily remained in Morocco—the Republican warships might even interdict the Strait of Gibralter. The Germans and Italians now helped Franco out of his embarrassment by mounting an airlift.

Beginning on July 27, twenty Junkers Ju-52 transport aircraft deployed from Germany to Seville and Tetuán in Spanish Morocco. During July and August, the Germans and Italians airlifted about 10,500 troops to Spain, in September another 9,700. The airlift was a remarkable demonstration of air power's crucial new role in modern warfare. However, it is not clear that the airlift was of decisive importance, since the Republican navy proved to be spectacularly incompetent throughout the war. In all likelihood, Franco could have successfully crossed the Strait of Gibraltar without serious losses.

While the airlift was in progress, the Germans also began to send combat forces. To conceal these activities, they created two commercial fronts, the *Compania Hispano-Marroqui de Transporto* and the *Rohstoffe und Waren Einkaufsgesellschaft*. Under cover of these organizations, merchantmen sailed directly from Germany to Spanish ports carrying a carefully concealed expeditionary force. The first ship left Hamburg during the night of July 31, bound for Cadiz. During August and September, further ships brought two companies of Mark I tanks, batteries of 20mm and 88mm antiaircraft guns and German fighter aircraft.

These deliveries set the pattern for German support of Franco throughout the war. It would concentrate on aviation and antiaircraft guns, with a small armor contingent. All such weapons would be used by German crews until eventually turned over to the Spaniards. In August, Colonel Ritter Wilhelm von Thoma arrived to take command of German Army troops in Spain and also to train Spanish troops in the use of German equipment. Like other foreign officers in Spain, Colonel von Thoma would find his new assignment unrewarding. The Spaniards were enthusiastic students—with a deplorable tendency to forget everything as soon as they learned it.

TOP: Strafing a Republican position in Spain is a German Me-109, a fighter hastily introduced in the Spanish Civil War after the Germans discovered their He-51 fighters were outclassed by the Russian Il-16 fighting on the Republican side. ABOVE: A German antiaircraft team mans an 88mm gun in Spain during the Spanish Civil War—testing ground for the Germany's Condor Legion.

The first German ship bound for Spain had an adventurous voyage. *Usaramo* took on 11 Junkers Ju-52 bombers, six Heinkel He-51 fighters, a number of 20mm antiaircraft guns, and various military supplies. The boxes of arms, labeled "furniture," immediately aroused the suspicions of dock workers in Hamburg, a traditionally leftist city. The workers warned the Republican side that *Usaramo* was underway with a military cargo. On August 6, it approached the Spanish port of Cádiz. The Republican battleship *Jaime I* challenged *Usaramo*, which at once made a dash for port. Unfortunately for the Republican side, most naval officers had been removed for their Nationalist sympathies. Without qualified gunnery officers, *Jamie I*

Republican snipers wait out the siege of Nationalist rebels defending the Alcazar, the Spanish fortress at Toledo that held out against Republican forces for more than two months in 1936.

fired wide of its target, allowing *Usaramo* to reach the safety of Nationalist shore batteries.

As the attempted coup degenerated into civil war, other European countries had to consider their policies. Germany and Italy had quickly and decisively chosen their side, although they maintained a pretense of neutrality. Soviet Russia openly declared its sympathy for the Republic. The crucial decisions lay with France and Britain. France had its own Popular Front government which favored the Republic and would have liked to provide aid. But the French were deathly afraid the Spanish Civil War might grow into a general war. The British also wanted desperately to preserve the peace of Europe, but had scant sympathy for the Spanish Republic, which seemed to them dangerously radical. As a compromise, the French proposed a non-intervention plan which ultimately was accepted by all the great powers. In practice, "non-intervention" meant that Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union did as they pleased, while the democratic powers pretended not to see.

From the outset, non-intervention proved a farce. On August 3, the French ambassador in Rome presented Count Ciano a draft of his government's non-intervention plan. The same day, the German battleship *Deutschland* put into Ceuta in Spanish Morocco. Its captain went to lunch with Franco while an escort of Spanish *Falangists* shouted "Heil Hitler!" On August 8, France closed her frontier with Spain, and on August 15, Britain prohibited the shipment of war materiel to Spain. These actions deprived Franco of nothing, while severely hampering his Republican opponents.

For his part, Hitler had no intention of withdrawing support from Franco. On the contrary, he decided to increase German assistance at the same time that Germany became a formal member of the Non-Intervention Committee meeting in London. During October, several thousand German soldiers and airmen deployed to Spain. By the end of the month, they were organized as the Condor Legion, commanded by the formidable General Hugo Sperrle, a man destined to become a field marshal during World War II.

Sperrle arrived in Spain with a personal directive from Hitler to Franco to speed the Nationalist offensive towards Madrid. With the *nom de guerre* "Señor Sanders," Sperrle established his headquarters in the Nationalist stronghold of Seville. By the first week of November, his Condor Legion encompassed four bomber squadrons and four fighter squadrons, each squadron having the authorized

strength of 12 aircraft. At this stage of the war, the bombers were variants of the Junkers Ju-52, the same aircraft used in the airlift. The fighters were Heinkel He-51 biplanes with open cockpits, a type soon to be made obsolete by the superlative Messerschmitt Bf-109. The Legion also included four tank companies, each with four Mark I tanks. These were thin-skinned, by later World War II standards, and had mounted machine guns as their main armament. The Legion mustered some 6,500 men, a strength it would maintain throughout most of the war. In addition to land and air forces, the Germans also provided naval advisors operating from the battleships *Deutschland* and *Admiral Scheer*.

The Germans surrounded the Condor Legion with a thick cloak of secrecy—except in Spain, where they practically flaunted their presence. Pilots reporting for Legion duty in Germany were ordered to wear civilian clothes and to represent themselves as tourists on an excursion sponsored by *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy). They were promised promotions and substantial monthly bonuses for serving in Spain, as well as the priceless opportunity to sharpen their fighting skills. Their families, however, were not to know where they were going. Letters home were sent in care of "Max Winkler" in Berlin, placed in new envelopes and postmarked "Berlin." But in Nationalist Spain, Sperrle made little effort to disguise the presence of German troops. He took possession of first-rate hotels—Hotel Cristina in Seville, and later Hotel Maria Isabel in Burgos—and flew the swastika flag from the roofs. Members of the Legion wore a distinctive olive-brown uniform with unique rank insignia. The Germans reserved the best brothels for their own use and marched in formation to these establishments, much to the amusement of Spanish whores. The Nationalist radio, for its part, virtually advertised the Germans' presence by playing *Deutschland Über Alles* daily.

At the same time that Sperrle was forming his Condor Legion, the first Soviet aid began to reach the Republicans. In October, Soviet ships arrived at Bilbao, on the Bay of Biscay, carrying aircraft and armored vehicles. These shipments included 42 Ilyushin Il-15 biplane fighters and 31 newer Ilyushin Il-16 monoplane fighters. The Il-16 was a modern aircraft with a closed cockpit, retractable landing gear and a large radial engine. The armored vehicles included some thin-skinned armored cars and T-26 tanks. For this support, the Republic surreptitiously shipped its gold reserves to the Soviet Union. At the end of October, Soviet tanks attacked Nationalist troops south of Madrid, but the unsupported tanks had to withdraw. At the same time, Ju-52 aircraft with German pilots began bombing raids on Madrid. The raids continued into November, killing about 500 civilians in the first extensive use of modern bombers against a civilian population. The battle for Madrid reached its climax during November, as Franco's legionnaires tried unsuccessfully to dislodge the Republican militia and the soon-to-be-famous International Brigades, left-wing volunteers to the cause from Europe, Canada, Latin America, and the United States. The Germans had thought they were helping Franco win a quick victory. Now they saw that this civil war might last a long time.

On November 18, 1936, Germany and Italy simultaneously recognized Franco's Nationalist government in an effort to bolster his cause. Other countries continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the Republic as the sole legitimate government in Spain. At the same time, the Germans sent General Wilhelm von Faupel as military chargé to Nationalist headquarters at Burgos in Old Castile. The general promptly offered the unwelcome advice that Germany and Italy send one division each to break the current stalemate. In late November, Count Ciano and Franco agreed that Italy would send a division of Black Shirts, or fascist militia, to be outfitted with uniforms of the Spanish Foreign Legion. In December, Hitler made the decision not to send more German troops. Making a virtue of necessity, he decided that a quick Nationalist victory was not in German interests, especially if it diverted resources from German rearmament. Indeed, a long civil war would be more useful, since it focused world attention on Spain, away from Germany's territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe.

In January 1937, Franco rather unwillingly accepted a 10-man advisory staff of German and Italian officers as part of the price for continued aid. The following month, Nationalist forces opened an offensive from Old Castile south towards Madrid. The Germans provided two machine-gun battalions, several batteries of medium artillery, 88mm antiaircraft guns, and a few companies of tanks. They also conducted more Ju-52 bombing raids. The ensuing Battle of the Jarama River that February brought the Nationalists more territory but no decisive victory. American International Brigade members suffered greatly in the fighting.

In March, Italian troops, including the Littorio Division

from the regular army, attempted an offensive towards Madrid in the Guadalajara area. At first the Italians did well, but the Republicans counterattacked with the support of Soviet T-26 tanks. They won the only clear-cut Republican victory of the war, routing the Italians and causing some 5,000 casualties. The Italians' military reputation in Spain never recovered from this fiasco. After the failure of these offensives, meanwhile, Franco's foreign advisors convinced him to attempt something less difficult: an attack northwards against the Basques.

The Basques were an anomaly in the Spanish Civil War. Their fervid Catholicism and general conservatism should have made them Franco's natural allies. But the Basques, ethnically distinct from the Spaniards, were also separatists. They stayed loyal to the Republic, which had promised to respect their autonomy. A successful campaign against the Basques would give Franco full control of northwestern Spain, and thus would close the Biscay ports to the Republicans.

From his new headquarters in Salamanca, German General Sperrle supported the campaign with three squadrons of Ju-52 bombers and one squadron of recently arrived Heinkel He-111s. This aircraft was a purpose-built, two-engine medium bomber which would become a mainstay of the German bomber force. In March, Sperrle also received a squadron of Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters. The Germans desperately needed these newer fighters—their He-51 fighters were badly outclassed by the Soviets' Ilyushin Il-16 on the Republican side. The Bf-109 proved itself in Spain and later became famous as the principal adversary of British fighters in the Battle of Britain. At the time of its introduction, the Bf-109 was probably the world's best fighter aircraft.

Of all the carnage in the Spanish Civil War, one event would prove especially horrible: the German bombing of the Basque town of Guernica on April 26, 1937. This small market town had great political significance as a quasi-capital for the Basque people. For centuries, Spanish monarchs reaffirmed Basque autonomy at the town's famous, 600-year-old oak tree. On the fateful day, Franco's troops were advancing about 30 miles away. At about 4:40 p.m., a single He-111 aircraft appeared, piloted by Condor Legion ace Rudolf von Moreau, followed by a squadron of He-51 fighters. Thereafter, swarms of Ju-52 bombers arrived at 20-minute intervals over the town.

Again and again, German aircraft strafed and bombed Guernica, destroying the center of town with incendiaries and high explosives, including several 1,000-pound bombs. About one-third of the helpless, undefended population became casualties: 1,654 killed, 889 wounded. These were fewer casualties than during the Madrid bombing, but the Guernica raid seemed especially frightful and senseless to a world not yet inured to strategic bombing. Mindful of public opinion, Hitler immediately demanded that Germany be absolved of all responsibility. Accordingly, Franco released a statement charging that it had been retreating communists who had dynamited and set fire to the town. For the next 30 years it remained a crime in Franco's Spain to say publicly that Guernica had been bombed by the Nationalists, although all the world knew it. As late as 1967, a priest from Navarre was tried — although acquitted — for writing that it was the Germans who had actually bombed the town.

Guernica's brutal devastation focused world attention, however briefly, on the plight of civilians in the Spanish war. Even for a civil war, when emotions and bitterness traditionally run high, the outrages perpetrated by both sides were blood-chilling. At Badajoz, where the Republican militia put up a determined defense, Franco's troops herded thousands of prisoners into the town's bullring. In ten days, machine-gunners executed 4,000 people. Nationalist generals encouraged such slaughter as a way of winning the war through intimidation. In Republican-held territory, communist-controlled *checas*, or tribunals, conducted rump trials for those suspected of supporting the rebellion. Many were executed on the unsubstantiated testimony of former servants, debtors or personal enemies. Thousands of Catholic priests and nuns were also slain by Republican forces enraged by their apparent support of Franco and large landowners. In Madrid, gangs of left-wing toughs cruised the streets, picking up victims to take for a *paseo*, or ride, which ended with a bullet to the back of the head. Picasso's great masterpiece, "Guernica," painted in response to the German bombing, was a powerful statement against the slaughter of innocents. But the

A WRITERS' WAR IN SPAIN

Among the thousands of foreigners who flocked to Spain during its civil war—to fight or to watch the fighting—were some of this century's finest writers. At one time or another during the three-year conflagration, writers as diverse in temperament as Ernest Hemingway and W.H. Auden, George Orwell and André Malraux, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and John Dos Passos, arrived to observe the war. Some, like the promising young English poet John Cornford, never went home again.

Of all the writers to visit Spain during the war, none was more prominent than Ernest Hemingway. Already, at the age of 37, Hemingway had become a world figure, as famous for his brawling, big-game-hunting approach to life as for his notable novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. The first, set in Spain, had begun his lifelong love affair with the country and its people. It was inevitable, when war broke out, that Hemingway would be in the thick of the action.

Hemingway, with fellow-novelist John Dos Passos and Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, produced a pro-Republican documentary on the war, *The Spanish Earth*, which eventually was shown at the White House to President and Mrs. Roosevelt. Hemingway also raised money (and loaned thousands of dollars of his own) for the Republican government.

His greatest achievement to come out of the Spanish Civil War was the novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which detailed in fictionalized form, the experiences of American radical Robert Merriman, a California college professor who rose to command the XVth International Brigade, Americans fighting for the government against Franco's Nationalists. The book, published in 1940, became an instant bestseller and later was made into a movie starring Gary Cooper as the hero and Ingrid Bergman as his war-ravaged lover, Maria. But by then, the war would be over, and the real Robert Merriman would be dead.

A writer who took a more active role in the war was English essayist and novelist George Orwell. Unlike Hemingway, Orwell went to Spain not merely to soak up the atmosphere but (as he put it) "to do a spot of fighting." Disdaining both the communist militia and the communist-dominated International Brigades, Orwell joined the dissident organization POUM, or Workers' Party for Marxist Unity.

killings in Spain simply continued with no stopping.

During 1937, the Germans and Italians tried to interdict supplies reaching the Republicans by sea. In January, the International Non-Intervention Committee organized naval patrols in the waters off Spain. Participants included Germany and Italy, a classic case of setting the fox to guard the chickens. On May 26, the Republican air force bombed the German battleship *Deutschland* off Ibizza in the Balearic Islands, killing 31 sailors. Hitler was enraged. Five days later, German warships bombarded the town of Almería in Andalusia. At the same time, Joachim von Ribbentrop, German ambassador to Britain, cynically threatened to withdraw from the Non-Intervention Committee unless his government received assurance from the Republican government that there would be no repetition of the attack. The Italians went even further, using submarines and bombers based on Majorca to interdict merchantmen approaching Republican ports on the Mediterranean Sea. During July and August, the Italians sank 12 Spanish, eight British, and two Soviet ships. As a result, the Republic received few supplies over the sea lanes.

From the beginning, both sides in the war had invited outside assistance. It reached its height during the summer of 1937. At that time, the Soviets had 2,000 to 8,000 personnel in Spain, largely pilots, tank crewmen and military advisors. Perhaps as many as 35,000 foreigners were involved in the International Brigades, including some 3,000 Americans in the XV or Abraham Lincoln Brigade. On the Nationalist side, the Condor Legion stayed at a constant 6,000 men, while Italian troops probably totaled about 50,000, organized into two divisions and several fascist militia units with grandiose names like Black Flames and Black Arrows. After their failure at Guadalajara in March, the Italians acted more cautiously, adding little beyond their numbers to the Nationalist effort.

In contrast to the Germans, who veiled the Condor Legion in secrecy, the Italians became quite open about their intervention, even to the point of publishing casualty lists and sailing announcements. But by fall, Mussolini was losing enthusiasm. He decided to concentrate Italian combat troops in a single large division and withdraw the rest. Franco made this withdrawal seem virtuous by agreeing to a British plan that all "volunteers" depart Spain. The departure of a few thousand sick Italian troops was publicized as proof that the "volunteers" were leaving.

The war seemed stalemated during 1938. On March 9, Franco opened an unsuccessful campaign on the Ebro River with the intention of pushing north to Barcelona, now the provisional capital of Republican Spain. The Condor Legion supported this offensive with artillery batteries, several tank companies, and at least one squadron of Junkers Ju-87, now appearing in action for the first time. This aircraft later acquired a great and perhaps undeserved reputation during the German invasion of France. The *Sturzkampfflugzeug* (dive bomber) abbreviated *Stuka*, was an all-metal, single-engined machine with distinctive, inverted gull wings. It had a large cockpit for pilot and weapons operator and a big glass canopy affording good visibility. It mounted two machine guns and carried a 1,000-pound bomb load under the fuselage, an armament

A fierce hater of totalitarianism in all its guises, Orwell was shot through the throat, and nearly killed, a few months after arriving in Spain. Returning to Barcelona to recuperate, he immediately found himself a hunted man. An outbreak of spontaneous street fighting among rival Leftists had cynically been blamed on POUM by communists opposed to its more egalitarian views.

Disguised as a British tourist, Orwell managed to escape to France, unlike many POUM members pitilessly murdered by communist assassins. Orwell subsequently published *Homage to Catalonia*, recounting his disillusioning experience in Spain. His later novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, further savaged communism. Still, Orwell could say of the war: "There was at any rate no doubt as to who was in the right. The central issue of the war was the attempt of people like this to win the decent life which they know to be their birthright."

French novelist André Malraux, already a veteran of the Chinese struggle against Japan, took participation in the war one step further. With the help of sympathetic French bureaucrats, Malraux organized his own private air force, the *Escuadrilla España*, and directed its efforts against the fascists. Although he held no pilot's license, Malraux trained his own pilots and even flew combat missions himself. With his gold-braided colonel's hat and scarlet cape, Malraux cut a Byronic figure in the war, which he later dramatized in his novel, *Man's Hope*.

French writer-activist André Malraux not only gathered his own air squadron in support of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, but he also made a movie in celebration of the squadron and its cause—advertised in this poster.

Characteristic of both the nobility and futility of the Republican cause in Spain was the fate of the young English poet John Cornford. At 20, Cornford was already a promising poet and scholar. A great-grandson of Charles Darwin, he had won a prestigious research award at Trinity College, Cambridge.

A devoted communist, Cornford went to Spain to write articles for the London *New Chronicle*, but quickly abandoned his journalistic duties and joined the Republican cause. Severely wounded during the Battle of Madrid, Cornford returned to the front lines, his head still swathed in bandages, to take part in a counterattack aimed at Córdoba. At Lopera, on the night of his 21st birthday, Cornford was killed in a suicidal charge. His body, left behind in a field of olive trees, was never recovered.

But ironically, with all the writers in the Spanish war, the most indelible single image came, not through an author's power of description, but with a chance snapshot by a then-unknown combat photographer. Robert Capa's blurred and grainy photo of a lonely Republican soldier pitching backward in death on a vacant hillside has become, for many, the ultimate depiction of death in battle, not just in Spain, but throughout the world, wherever men fight—and inevitably die—for their truths.

TOP: The fearsome German Stuka *dive bomber saw its first action in the Spanish Civil War, an opportunity for the Germans to develop new techniques in close air support of ground forces. ABOVE: After Franco's final victory in 1939, the Condor Legion paraded its men, rolling stock and aircraft as a farewell to the newly-installed strongman of Spain.*

that later proved inadequate. The real gain for the Germans lay not in testing the aircraft, but in developing techniques of close air support. Using radio for control, the Germans were able to coordinate tactical fire support of ground forces more effectively than previously had been imagined. This air-ground coordination later proved to be a valuable element in their World War II *blitzkrieg*.

The Nationalists mounted a decisive campaign in December 1938. By this time, foreign assistance had declined considerably from its high during the previous year. Aircraft strength in the Condor Legion was low due to attrition, but it had converted entirely to He-111 bombers and Bf-109 fighters. Mussolini had withdrawn his troops entirely during the fall without much opposition from Franco, who thought materiél was more useful than Italian troops. At the same time, the Republicans had seriously exhausted their strength in unsuccessful counterattacks across the Ebro River during the fall, and were receiving little support from outside the country. As a result, Franco enjoyed overwhelming superiority during the final, crushing campaign in Catalonia. Nationalist troops entered Barcelona on January 26, 1939, and Republican troops streamed northward over the French frontier, where they met a cold reception. Thousands were interred in virtual concentration camps. By the end of March, the Nationalists finally took Madrid. Thousands of Franco supporters, the celebrated "Fifth Column" of Nationalists in the capital city, took to the streets, waving yellow-and-red flags and shouting the Nationalist battle cry, "Arriba, Espana!" Franco himself, ill with the flu, concluded his final communique, "The war is ended," and prepared to enter Madrid as a conquering hero.

For the Condor Legion, it only remained to celebrate a joint victory. On May 22, three days after the tumultuous Nationalist victory parade in Madrid, the Legion held its own parade in León, in northwestern Spain, then embarked for Germany. Franco, bidding his German allies farewell, declared that he had "always considered the Condor Legion as one of the institutions of our crusade." In June, Adolf Hitler presided at a homecoming ceremony for the Legion in Berlin. Fourteen thousand veterans of the war paraded past the *Führer*, who awarded the Golden Spanish Cross with Diamonds to legionnaires who had contributed greatly to Franco's ultimate victory. Among those receiving the highest award were Count Max von Hoyos, who helped ferry troops to the mainland from Africa; Adolf Galland, inventor of carpet bombing; fighter ace Hannes Trautloft; *Stuka* commander Heinrich Brücker, and Major General Wolfram von Richthofen, final commander of the Legion and cousin of the famous World War I ace. Franco, said Hitler, "ought to erect a monument to the glory of the Junkers 52. It is this aircraft that the Spanish revolution has to thank for its victory."

It is not easy to estimate the impact of German aid on the course of the war. In terms of manpower, the German contribution was very small, not over 6,500 men at a time in a war which saw about 700,000 combatants on each side. But the Germans concentrated almost exclusively on providing firepower. Their bombing raids, artillery fire, antiaircraft protection from the Republic's air force, and occasional employment of tanks had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. It would be safe to say that the Condor Legion was a considerable help to Franco, although its influence was never decisive.

The Germans, for their part, profitted greatly from their experience in Spain. Their famous fighter ace Werner Mölders developed here the *Rotte* and *Schwarm* tactics that would prove such an advantage during the first phase of the Battle of Britain. Mölders, a serious, introverted man, returned from Spain as the top fighter ace with 14 kills. His tactics centered on a *Rotte* (pair) composed of leader and wingman flying on the leader's sunside. The leader would initiate the attack while defended by his wingman. The addition of a second *Rotte* produced a *Schwarm* (called "finger four" by the British pilots). This second *Rotte* flew in trailing formation on the shadow side of the first. It had the same elements of leader and wingman. These open, flexible tactics were highly effective in dogfights, especially during the intense combat over Britain.

Mölders had 54 kills when he died on the Eastern Front in 1941. Several other German aces also got their start in Spain. Walter Oesau left Spain with eight victories and won his Knight's Cross over Britain. He had 123 victories when he was killed in 1944. Other flyers whose noteworthy careers began in Spain were Hans-Karl Meyer, later killed over England, and Herbert Ihlefeld, who flew over 1,000 combat sorties and survived the war.

Nationalist General Francisco Franco and companions appear pleased as they walk the streets of Burgos, first home of the rebel junta that Franco led in 1936. In the civil war that swept Spain, 126,000 persons were executed and 200,000 civilians were killed, compared to 110,000 Nationalists and 175,000 Republicans killed in action.

The Germans practiced combined arms tactics in Spain to a limited extent. The Condor Legion did not fight as a unit. Rather it supported Nationalist operations, and these were usually unimaginative and poorly coordinated. Although armor appeared on both sides, it was too weak to create the fluid conditions of the classic German *Blitzkrieg*. However, the Germans were at least able to gain some practical experience in coordinating fire from tanks, artillery and aircraft aviation. They also used radio-equipped staff cars in the forward area to call for air strikes in support of ground forces. This early version of the aviation liaison officer provided a model for German close air support during their successful World War II campaigns of 1940 through 1942. The *Luftwaffe* was largely a tactical air force in close support of the ground forces, never developing a strategic arm. It began to learn its techniques of close support in Spain.

Still, the Germans' successful bombing campaign during the Spanish Civil War may have misled them to some extent. The He-111 medium bomber looked effective in Spain's relatively friendly skies, but it proved to be under-armed and too slow during World War II. In 1941, British pilots had little difficulty riddling this slow-moving machine and evading its three machine guns. The Germans added a cannon under the belly and two machine guns in the waist, but they could not add much speed. When combat-loaded, the He-111 lumbered along at about 200 miles per hour. Neither the He-111 or the later Ju-88 medium bomber gave the Germans a strategic bombing capability comparable with the British or Americans.

Ironically, the Germans, who had pioneered terror bombing of civilian populations in Spain, would later be the major victims of this brutal form of war. The pilots who tormented Madrid and Guernica little imagined how much worse their own German cities would suffer during the century's first total war. If World War I's trench-ridden stalemate had made modern warfare intolerable for soldiers, the Condor Legion's delivery of death from the sky made such warfare equally terrible for civilians. It was in Spain where the innocents—women, children, and old men—first began to die in staggering numbers. □

United States Army Historian Bruce Pirnie holds a doctorate from Heidelberg University providing insights into German history. As further reading, he suggests Condor Legion *by Peter Elstob and* The Spanish Civil War *by Anthony Beevor.*

Grandson David offers insight into Dwight D. Eisenhower's pathway through political minefields.

By Theodore A. Wilson

In 1974, David Eisenhower decided to write a short book on his grandfather's second term as President. Twelve years later, he has completed a very different and much longer treatment of the participation of his grandfather in the climatic events of World War II. In the process of unravelling cause-and-effect relationships leading backwards from the late 1950s to the early 1940s, David Eisenhower became a historian. In fact, at points in this huge, sometimes unwieldy but generally entertaining work, General of the Army and President Dwight D. Eisenhower's grandson shows himself to be a very good historian.

Eisenhower: At War 1943-1945 (Random House, 1986, $29.95) offers a richly detailed account of war in the European Theater from the perspective of Eisenhower, the man who served as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces during the run-up to OVERLORD and all through the final battles in the West. One would imagine that this would be ground so often plowed that nothing useful would be obtained from still another narrative of the workings of Allied High Command from Normandy to the Elbe. But, surprisingly, such is not the case.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, as he appeared to artist H. Carr in 1943, the year before the Normandy invasion. In his new book on Ike during the war years, grandson David "looks over his shoulder."

David Eisenhower makes a convincing argument that Eisenhower espoused a view of coalition relationships far more broad and more sophisticated than the conventional description of Ike the bridgebuilder between American and British interests and prejudices. or Ike the referee between American General George Patton and Field Marshall Sir Bernard Montgomery.

Deeply aware of the interrelatedness of the titantic struggle between German and Soviet forces in the East and what Anglo-American strategists and politicians hoped to accomplish in the West, Eisenhower understood how important were the Russians to the success of OVERLORD. From Eisenhower's vantage and that of the Combined Chiefs of Staff—"the American-British committee in Washington which acted as Eisenhower's supervising authority"—there was no sharp divide between the problems of war and the problems of peace. Fully conscious of the potential effects of military decisions (such as the political implications of devastating Germany via area bombing and the diversion of Allied forces away from Berlin and toward Denmark and Austria), Eisenhower exercised his authority and military judgement to conclude the war *and* to maintain cordial relations with the Russians. The book's final chapter, a 124-page narrative of the events of winter and spring of 1945, offers impressive evidence as to Eisenhower's successful juggling of military and political aims.

There are, as well, informative assessments of various major controversies. President Franklin D. Roosevelt played a more active role in the campaign for a "second front" in 1943 than generally claimed. Not surprisingly, since the work is based almost solely on American sources. David Eisenhower supports Eisenhower's decisions with regard to planning for the Normandy breakout and the choice of a "broad front" strategy for the onslaught against Germany. He dismisses the notion of a possible early collapse of German resistance in the late summer of 1944 as a pipe dream.

Similarly, the discussion of Operation MARKET-GARDEN stops not far short of acknowledging that Eisenhower knew in advance that Montgomery's plan would fail and approved it anyway, to silence the belligerent Britisher. While the description of the Ardennes counteroffensive (Battle of the Bulge) owes much to other historians, there is much fascinating detail about the Eisenhower-Omar Bradley relationship and the attempts by British Field Marshall Alan Brooke and Montgomery to undermine the existing SHAEF command structure.

In sum, David Eisenhower follows squarely in the paths trodden by Forrest Pogue, Martin Blumenson, Russell Weigley, Stephen Ambrose, and Charles MacDonald. There are no startling disclosures nor any challenging re-interpretations based upon hitherto-unknown evidence. What *Eisenhower: At War 1943-45* does offer

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the patient reader is a sympathetic yet thoughtfully-drawn reconstruction of the daily pressures to which Eisenhower was subjected. Perhaps because of lack of experience at recreating the context in which historical actions take place, David Eisenhower provides a view of the war over his grandfather's shoulder, so to speak. We see what papers crossed Eisenhower's desk (and, almost always, in the order he saw them), listen in on his conversations with Montgomery and Bradley and Patton, and kibitz at the regular evening bridge games. Much of what the reader sees, as a result, is trivial—just as much of what Eisenhower saw as SHAEF Commander was trivia—but there are marvelous insights here into Ike's personality, the dynamics of the wartime coalition, and the high politics of military decision-making.

War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War, *By John W. Dower, Pantheon Books, 1986, $22.50*

John W. Dower's purpose in writing *War Without Mercy* was to "identify dynamic patterns in the torrent of war words and graphic images" used by both Allied and Japanese propagandists during World War II and to show "how stereotyped and often blatantly racist thinking contributed to poor military intelligence and planning, atrocious behavior, and the adoption of exterminationist policies."

Both the Americans and the Japanese drew on folklore and stereotypes of strange and foreign peoples from their own past with which to identify, excoriate and dehumanize the enemy. American stereotypes concerning inferior races, for example, dated back to the period of western exploration and colonization of the New World, Africa and Asia. These stereotypes ranged from those that identified native peoples as blood-thirsty, godless, subhuman savages to those that identified them as children. Whereas the native as blood-thirsty, subhuman vermin "deserved" extermination, the child-savage "needed" the guidance of a mature, white, Christian nation willing to assume "the white man's burden."

The Japanese also drew on history, myth and folklore, not only for stereotypes of the enemy, but also for evidence supportive of their own theories of racial superiority. Myths concerning the origin of the Japanese, and particularly the Imperial Family, were cited as proof of the racial purity of the Japanese, or Yamato, race—and the divinely ordained mission of the emperior to bring all the world under

his direct authority.

The concept of Japanese racial purity, coupled with that of "proper place"—itself the projection of the Japanese domestic, hierarchial order onto the world stage—were the lynchpins of Japan's racial supremacy theories. Whereas racial purity explained Japanese superiority over the "mongrel" nations of the world, "proper place" ordained a subordinate role to each nation in a political and economic system dominated by Japan. The Japanese perceived the American enemy not only as a racial "mongrel" that had usurped the place of its betters, but also as a destructive "demon with a human face" to be conquered and domesticated to the service of mankind. Although American and Japanese stereotypes of each other were drawn from quite different sources, they produced the same effect: the dehumanization of the enemy. As Professor Dower notes, "the end results of racial thinking on both sides were virtually identical—being hierarchy, arrogance, viciousness, atrocity, and death." While Dower has done a laudable job in assembling and analyzing his data, *War Without Mercy* is not an easy read. It is invaluable, however, for the light it sheds on the relationship between perceptions of the enemy and the conduct of war. For the military historian, Dower's analysis of American and Japanese stereotypes underscores the dangers inherent in underestimating actual, or potential, enemies.

Underestimation of the Japanese, led many governmental and military leaders in both Britain and the United States to downplay the seriousness of the Japanese threat. The Japanese, in turn, underestimated the will of the American people and their ability to unite and fight a total war to its end.

With the emergence of the Soviet Union and the growing threat of world communism, many of the same stereotypes previously applied to the Japanese were applied to the Russians and, later, the Chinese Communists. Yet, the old anti-Japanese prejudices continued to exist below the surface and have recently re-emerged in response to the current trade disputes between Japan and the United States. In Japan, there also has been a re-emergence of the wartime rhetoric concerning Japanese racial purity as the reason for her strong position in the world economic system. Professor Dower believes these are ominous developments, as the memories and hates of the past could prove detrimental to relations between the United States and Japan.

Lawrence D. Higgins

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UnderCover

Continued from page 8

It was at Frascati that Skorzeny chose to take into his own confidence two more SS men: Himmler's personal representative, Colonel Eugen Dollmann and the Embassy's police attaché, Lt. Col. Herbert Kappler, who would later be tried for the Ardeattine Caves massacre outside Rome in 1944.

Within days 10,000 of Student's paratroopers and a contingent of *Kommandos* had arrived in Italy. Now the problem remained: where was the *Duce*?

The Italians of Marshal Pietro Badoglio's new regime politely refused all inquiries for information.

After Mussolini had been dismissed by King Victor Emmanuel III in Rome, he was met at the King's Palace, the Quirinale, by Carabinieri troopers who hustled him into a waiting ambulance and took him secretly to Rome's Podgora Barracks. In the ensuing surrender negotiations with the Allies, Mussolini was slated to be the featured prize. The Italians, nervously expecting a German rescue mission from the very start, gave his guards direct orders to kill Mussolini rather than lose him.

After two more days, Mussolini was taken, still in the civilian clothes he wore to see the King, to Gaeta, then to the island of Ponza, the largest of the Pontine Islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea, where he remained for a fortnight. On August 7th—as Rommel noted in his diary that two more Italian divisions were being moved up to the Brenner Pass to face the Germans—*Il Duce* was moved again, to the Isle of La Maddalena (the Magdalene), a naval base near the northern tip of Sardinia. On the 18th, he and his guards spotted a German plane overhead. Aboard were Skorzeny and his chief subordinate Karl Radl searching for the missing *Duce*! He was returned to the mainland after this aerial threat and housed in a villa on the slope of the Gran Sasso d'Italia (the Great Mountain of Italy), the highest peak in the Abruzzi Apenenine Range, a hundred miles from the capital.

Still uneasy about German intentions, the *Duce*'s jailers moved him one final time: to a five-story winter ski resort hotel on the highest inhabited location on the Gran Sasso, at the Campo Imperatore (Field of the Emperor), with 250 soldiers guarding him round-the-clock. The "impregnable" location could only be reached by cable car and road, and both were under heavy surveillance. The Italians reasoned that it would be impossible to storm the heights of this high mountain eyrie without either a battle or the *Duce*'s death—or both. When he first laid eyes on the grim, fortress-like Hotel del Gran Sasso, the ever-dramatic *Duce* quipped: "Ah! The highest prison in the world!" At 6,500 feet above sea level, he may have been right.

Meanwhile, as *Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler consulted astrologers in Berlin to "devine" the whereabouts of the *Duce*, Skorzeny, in Italy, had come across clues: a love letter from an Italian policeman on the island of Ponza to his girlfriend stating that Mussolini had been there, followed by gossip from an Italian Navy officer that the *Duce* was aboard a cruiser anchored at La Spezia naval base.

As soon as Hitler learned of this intelligence, he radioed Skorzeny immediately: "Board the warship and remove its captive!" By then, however, the *Duce* had been taken to La Maddalena's Villa Weber. Disguised as drunken Italian sailors, Skorzeny and SS Lieutenant Robert Warger prowled the local bars on the island's waterfront, eventually finding a gardener who worked at the Villa Weber.

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He led Warger there, to observe the *Duce*, standing on a narrow terrace staring out to sea.

The two "sailors" next discovered that the villa was protected by a high wall, a machine-gun post and Carabinieri soldiery on patrol, with two telephone lines linking the building to the outside world. On August 18th—the day Mussolini spotted their plane overhead—the two were taking aerial photographs from a Heinkel-111 when they were spotted and shot down into the ocean by a squadron of British Spitfires. Skorzeny blacked out, broke three ribs and almost drowned, but managed to regain consciousness just in time to retrieve his camera and its film from the sinking plane.

His stamina was not to be unrewarded, since, unknown to him, the *Duce* was spirited to the safety of the Gran Sasso.

Back at Frascati, Skorzeny learned that false information supplied by German *Abwehr* intelligence chief, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, had Hitler about to order an assault on the island of Corsica, Napoleon's birthplace, in the mistaken belief that Mussolini was there. Skorzeny and Student, fearful that this false lead might scotch their own plans for attack on the Villa Weber, flew immediately to Rastenburg to change the *Führer*'s mind.

Now, back at the Wolf's Lair with no *Duce* yet to show for this three-week effort, Skorzeny had to face down not only Hitler, but the entire Nazi High Command, figures such as Himmler, Von Ribbentrop and the portly Reich Marshal Hermann Goering, who was General Student's commanding officer, as well. Skorzeny persuasively presented a bold plan: German speedboats and minesweepers would quietly enter the Maddalena island's harbor on a routine "protocol" visit, then disembark *Waffen* SS antiaircraft troops who would conduct a peaceful, broad daylight parade to the very gates of the Villa Weber! Hitler approved the plan but also warned: "If you fail, I may have to disown you."

On the day of the proposed attack, however, Skorzeny and Radl learned to their chagrin that the *Duce* had been evacuated from the harbor that very morning by a white ambulance seaplane that they'd noticed earlier. Once again, Mussolini had been taken away under cover of the Red Cross, and the search—for the moment so close to its quarry—had to begin anew.

At this point, Kappler's intelligence unit in Rome picked up a secret missive to the Italian Ministry of the Interior in the Eternal City from Police General

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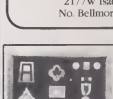

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Guiseppe Cueli which said, "Security measures around Gran Sasso completed." Since Skorzeny already knew that Cueli was the officer in charge of the Mussolini detail, the scent on the trail of the elusive *Duce* was fresh once more.

A search of Roman travel agencies for brochures and maps of the Gran Sasso proved mysteriously fruitless, but Skorzeny found a German visitor to the hotel who'd been there in 1938—five years before—and who recalled the funicular railway cable car and the steep mountain road to the top of the craggy peak. At the 10,000-foot mountain range itself, Skorzeny's agents found that a full regiment of troops was encamped on the Gran Sasso.

It was now September 8, 1943, the very day that Italy's surrender to the Allies was announced over the radio; now, more than ever, time was of the essence to see the *Duce* both found and liberated alive. Skorzeny ordered a second aerial reconnaissance. Aboard another HE-111, an automatic camera jammed, so a laughing Karl Radl held the huge Skorzeny out of the aircraft by his feet—it is said—as the giant SS commander dangled from the rear-gunner's turret, head first in the freezing air, photographing the Gran Sasso with a hand-held Leica.

This time, neither Mussolini nor his guards spotted Skorzeny. On the Gran Sasso, the *Duce* took his rest in a low-ceilinged, one-room apartment on the hotel's second floor. On that day—the day of his country's second switch from a German to an Allied alliance, he noted—a shepherd named Alfonso Nisi told his future from a deck of cards, "You are due to be rescued in rather romantic circumstances!" To which Mussolini bellowed, "You and your damned false prophecies! You're trying to make a fool of me!"

In Rome, meanwhile, both Radl and Kappler confronted Carabinieri General Ferdinando Soleti, demanding to know if, in fact, the *Duce* was being held on the Gran Sasso. Soleti admitted that it was so. Skorzeny's photos revealed a rugged, near-lunar landscape with an oblong patch that looked like a tarmac stretch that might be the only landing spot near the blockhouse-like hotel. Now Skorzeny had to figure out *how* to take the *Duce* alive. He ruled out a ground assault as taking too long, and reasoned that an airborne drop by parachute would negate the element of surprise, and would require high-altitude breathing equipment they didn't have and couldn't get in time. This left only one means for assault: a glider-borne air attack by way of the meadow behind the hotel.

Due to the numerous rocks and ditches that would obviously hamper such a suicidal landing attempt, General Student's technical experts predicted 80 percent casualties for the proposed mission. Armed with Hitler's command to "Bring me my friend Mussolini!" Captain Skorzeny persisted, however. The mission was on.

Luftwaffe Lieutenant Otto Berlepsch would lead the 75 paratroops of the 1st Parachute Division, while Student's intelligence officer, *Hauptmann* (Captain) Gerhard Langguth, would be in the navigator's cockpit of the first glider-towing plane, since, except for Radl and Skorzeny, he was the only man taking part who had actually seen the hotel from the air on September 8th. Skorzeny's *Waffen SS* troops, in *Luftwaffe* uniforms, would follow. The first four gliders' occupants were slated to capture the hotel, disarm the garrison and free Mussolini—alive.

At the same time, another *Luftwaffe* paratrooper contingent under the command of Major Otto-Harald Mors would seize the valley cable car station below. A red Very light would signal any gunfire, but it was hoped that the presence of the unwilling General Soleti, to be held at pistol-point in Skorzeny's own glider, would help forestall major military action on either side.

Despite the grim odds against his success, Skorzeny noted with satisfaction that all his men were volunteers. As he told his officers the night before the mission: "There are some things you can't work out with a slide rule. That's just where our experts may be wrong—and the Italians, too. The safer the enemy feel, the better our chances of catching them unawares."

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Still clad in mufti after his rescue from captivity, Italian strongman (and onetime Il Duce*) Benito Mussolini was flown back to Germany for brief reunion with Adolf Hitler. Rather than the retirement he sought, Mussolini then was installed as puppet head of a fascist republic consisting of still-occupied territory in northern Italy.*

4,600 pounds under full load. The DFS 230C-1, a special model, had been modified for this mission, with an extra door before the wing struts, and a trio of nose-contained braking rockets to stop its progress on the ground.

The warm air currents of the afternoon severely buffeted the aircraft, while the dense clouds made visibility perilous for the glider pilots. The aircraft were flimsy, with their fabric stretched taut over steel tubing. As the tow planes jerked the little gliders down the runway, men went literally green with air sickness, particularly General Soleti.

Halfway to the Gran Sasso, Skorzeny discovered that he'd lost the first two of his 12 gliders in a huge cloud—or so he thought. Actually, they had failed to take off because their tow planes had run into bomb craters on the airfield runway! Not only would he now have no covering force as his own glider landed to rush the hotel, but Skorzeny had lost the mission's most important man in the air—the navigator!

Undeterred, he whipped out a knife and slit a window into the glider's side so he could see. The rush of cold air revived General Soleti, whose coloring, Skorzeny later maliciously noted, improved substantially. Looking down into the Valley of the Aquilla (Eagle) moments later, Skorzeny could see Major Mors' paratroops in position at the cable car.

But he then discovered that the meadow "landing strip" atop the Gran Sasso was both uneven and rocky, not at all suitable for a glider landing, always a risky business. Nonetheless, Skorzeny gave the order: "Release the tow line!" The pilot's face went white, and Skorzeny had to shout it out a second time—"Dive! Crash-land, as near to the hotel as you can!" He saw a large boulder looming up just ahead as he screamed out, "Release the parachute!"

The chute at the glider's rear would act as a brake once the glider was *on the ground*, but Skorzeny's craft was still airborne. The premature release lifted the tail, lowered the nose and brought the glider to a thumping stop only a few feet away from the giant rock that could have killed them all. The craft's wood had broken, the tubing had snapped and the canvas had ripped apart, but, miraculously, Skorzeny's first glider was *on* the Gran Sasso with its men alive. The hotel was a mere 15 yards away.

At this moment—2 p.m. that peaceful Sunday—the sought-after *Duce* was sitting by an open window at the hotel, arms folded across his chest, enjoying the bright afternoon sunshine despite fears about his eventual fate. Suddenly, to his utter astonishment, he saw Skorzeny's glider crash right below him. Men in khaki uniforms fell out of the downed craft and began setting up a machine gun. Preceded by one of his men with a submachine gun, Skorzeny dragged Soleti after him toward the hotel, shouting to his men, "Don't fire until I fire."

Alarmed Italian troops and police were rushing about in all directions as Mussolini yelled out: "What are you doing? Don't you see? There's an Italian General. Don't shoot. Everything is all right. Don't shed blood!" The Italian troops, hearing first their former Supreme War Leader, for 22 years their *Duce*, shouting at them not to shoot, were now further surprised to see the terrified General Soleti approaching with a giant German officer in rapid strides, also screaming to

them not to shoot. The key moment of the entire mission was now at hand—what should they do?

Inside the hotel, General Cueli was lying undressed in bed quietly taking his afternoon siesta when Carabinieri Captain Albert Faiola rushed in to report the impossible German airborne assault. Should they listen to General Soleti—or obey Rome's earlier orders to shoot the *Duce*?

Skorzeny's gamble paid off; Cueli sat up in bed and said, without hesitation, "Give up!" Having no idea how few Germans actually opposed their vastly superior force, the two Italian officers hung from third-story windows shouting to their men below, "Don't shoot!" over and over again. Skorzeny, however, knew none of this as yet.

He rushed past an Italian sentry who stood rooted to the spot at the hotel entrance. Inside, he saw a man sitting at a radio transmitter tapping away, and quickly smashed the set with the butt of his heavy machine pistol. With a squad of *Waffen SS* behind him, Skorzeny bounded around a corner, only to find a 10-foot terrace blocking his path. A *Kommando* bent over, and Skorzeny stepped onto his back to scale the terrace.

Glancing upward, he saw the famous bald head. Knowing that the *Duce* spoke German, Skorzeny bawled out, "Get back—away from the window!" The *Duce*—soon to be Hitler's puppet ruler for German-occupied Northern Italy—obeyed this first of many new Nazi orders.

The *Duce* thus protected for the moment, Skorzeny's men raced through the main entrance of the building, booting silent machine guns out of their path. Another squad of Italian soldiers allowed Skorzeny to barge through their midst like a football player as he ran up a short flight of steps to Room 201, where three Italians were standing, transfixed: General Cueli, Captain Faiola, and, between them, Mussolini himself.

Skorzeny entered with Lieutenant Otto Schwerdt behind him. Two more of their men appeared at the window, having scaled the lightening conductor on the face of the building. The two Italian officers were seized and led away, and Schwerdt was assigned as the *Duce*'s personal bodyguard. Skorzeny shouted out the window to Radl: "We've got him here! All well so far. You look after the ground floor for me." More gliders had crash-landed, and now 50 Germans were on the Gran Sasso, still expecting an Italian counter-attack—which Skorzeny decided to forestall by added bravado.

"I want the commander! He must come at once," he shouted out the open doorway. In French, Skorzeny told the Italian colonel who appeared: "I ask for your immediate surrender. Mussolini is already in our hands. We hold the building. If you want to avert senseless bloodshed, you have 60 seconds. . ." The colonel returned with a goblet of red wine, and toasted Skorzeny: "To a gallant victor!" Skorzeny drank down the wine and had a white sheet flung out of the *Duce*'s window. Below, both German and Italian throats chanted the cry of old, "*Du-ce! Du-ce! Du-ce!*"

Incredibly, the whole operation had been carried out in just under four minutes from the time Skorzeny's glider had crashed until the surrender. Not a single shot had been fired by either side, no one had been wounded and only 10 men had been lightly injured when another glider had landed.

Skorzeny, perhaps sensing the import of the moment, turned to Mussolini and said, histrionically, "*Duce*, I have been sent by the *Führer* to set you free!" Right on cue for posterity and the history books, Italy's most famous politican rejoined: "I knew my friend Adolf Hitler would not abandon me. I embrace my liberator!" And with that, he gave the massive German SS *Kommando* leader a kiss on the cheek and a bear hug.

But their shared tribulations were not yet over. Skorzeny now turned his attention to the critical task of getting Mussolini *off* the Gran Sasso. By 3 p.m., the Germans themselves were leaving the peak four men at a time via the secured cable car, with one Italian hostage on each trip. However, Skorzeny ruled out taking the *Duce* down this way, as a 100-mile trip by road through hostile country would follow. Thus commenced the most fearful part of Operation EICHE. Three separate options had been planned for the removal of the *Duce* from the mountaintop: a land trip to Eagle of Abruzzi airport, followed by a flight out; a small aircraft landing near the lower cable car station in the valley and another flight and, finally—the most dangerous of all—a light plane landing *on* the Gran Sasso itself and then taking off into the mountainous skyline.

Until this point, Skorzeny had never seriously considered the third option, feeling it was too risky, but he had lost radio contact with General Student in Rome, so he couldn't ask for Ju-52 transport planes. The second plan had been scotched when the pilot of the group's accompanying Fieseler 156 *Storch* (Stork) spotter plane damaged one of the craft's wheels while landing

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In Naples, someone has painted an anti-Mussolini message on a wall in English. Confined to his "republic" in northern Italy, he presumably would not have seen it.

in the valley far below.

With reports beginning to filter up the mountain that Italian reinforcements were on the way to Gran Sasso, Skorzeny reluctantly decided to reconsider a flight from the captured hotel itself. Student's personal pilot, Captain Heinrich Gerlach, had been circling overhead in a second Stork since the mission began, and now Skorzeny signalled for him to land. A superb ace, Gerlach landed among the boulders, rocks and downed gliders without mishap.

As Skorzeny, Mussolini, Soleti and Radl (carrying the *Duce*'s luggage) approached the unsuspecting Gerlach, German combat photographers, thoughtfully brought along to capture this moment for history, snapped away, taking pictures that would soon appear in newspapers and magazines around the globe.

Mussolini, a pilot himself with more than 17,000 hours flying time, wasn't at all happy about the proposed means of his impending escape from the Gran Sasso, but he allowed Skorzeny to hustle him aboard the flimsy Stork with Gerlach nonetheless. What endangered his life even more, though, was the giant SS man's insistence on flying *with* the pair in a plane designed for only pilot and one passenger!

The Germans, the Italians and even the *Duce* pitched in to help clear a runway, but Gerlach dug in his heels, stating that they might all be killed in risking a take-off with their combined weight. The 200-yard, downhill runway would launch them literally off the edge of a towering cliff surrounded by mountain peaks.

Skorzeny countered, while gesturing to the *Duce*, "He's alone in a desert, and if he's lost and I fail in my duty to the *Führer*, I have to put a pistol to my head!"

At last, Gerlach grudgingly gave in—the newsreel footage shows the three during the strained take-off. The helmeted pilot at the controls; a shaky *Duce* in the passenger seat behind him, and the massive figure of Skorzeny crouched over double at the waist behind Mussolini.

The plane jerked ahead and coursed down the meadow at 100 mph to the clicking of camera shutters and the lusty cheers of both armies' troops. Radl—standing by Mussolini's abandoned suitcases—fainted and fell to the ground. The aircraft bounced down the hillside, its right wheel striking a rock, and then disappeared from view over the edge of the sheer cliff as it plunged straight down into a yawning abyss of more than 3,000 feet.

The plane dived and the ground rushed ever closer as even Skorzeny screamed and the *Duce* sat silent and white-faced in controlled fear. He later said the take-off was "a moment of real terror for me." With death staring them all in the face, Gerlach pushed the control stick forward, accelerated and slowly nosed the plane out of its perilous dive. Their lives spared, Mussolini broke the tension by beginning a running commentary of the Italian sights below them: "That's L'Aquila. I addressed a huge crowd there 20 years ago! Look! There's . . ."

At 5:30 p.m., they landed at Pratica di Mare with an oil-feed leak and a broken starboard strut, but the *Duce* gave Gerlach a fervent handshake: "Thank you for my life!" A three-engined Heinkel flew them on to the old Hapsburg capital of Vienna in Austria, where they landed late that night at Aspern airfield. On the way—alone at 10,000 feet—Skorzeny heard the *Duce* tell the details of his overthrow and captivity.

Far from wishing to return to

power, especially as Hitler's vassal, Mussolini's hope now was to retire to a quiet life of ease with his family. "My political career is finished—I am already dead and buried," he moaned. He was hardly the vigorous dictator seen in thousands of pre-war newsreels. At age 60, in a too-large blue suit, he looked old and tired, with an unshaven beard and gray hairs sprouting from the famous bald head. For years—since at least the late 1930s—he had been ravaged by a stomach illness which gave him an overall look of emaciation.

In Vienna, the two unlikely traveling companions—a fallen strongman without a country and the hulking soldier in the service of an adopted country—were driven to the sumptuous Imperial Hotel. The *Duce* went straight to bed, while Skorzeny took calls of congratulations from Himmler and Hitler.

The latter was ecstatic over the telephone line: "*Major* Skorzeny, you are a man after my own heart! You have gained the day and crowned our mission with success! You have performed a feat which will become part of history! Your *Führer* thanks you! You *have* given me back my old friend, Mussolini!"

The two Axis Pact partners were reunited on September 14th at Rastenburg, Hitler in uniform but the *Duce* still looking oddly out of place in his battered hat and blue suit. The *Führer* embraced his old friend warmly in front of the cameras, but refused his request for retirement. Instead, on the 23rd, he was bundled back as "Hitler's *Gauleiter* (district leader) for Italy," as the Allies later contemptuously called him, to head a Fascist Republic in the Northern part of Italy under Nazi protection. Meanwhile, the Germans in Italy fought the Allies yard-by-yard for almost two more years.

Even though the Badoglio regime declared war on its former ally on October 13, 1943, Italy geographically remained under the German heel.

As for Mussolini, in April 1945, as the war was ending, the *Duce* fled his German protectors and was on his way to neutral Switzerland when he was surrendered by a less resolute and fearless SS officer than Skorzeny to a band of Italian communist partisans. Without semblance of a trial, he and his mistress, Claretta Petacci, were stood up against a stone wall and shot. Later, their bullet-riddled bodies were taken to Milan—the starting place of Mussolini's extraordinary career in Italian politics—and strung upside-down by the heels for a brutal mob to execrate. □

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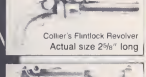
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Personality

Continued from page 10

nickname, "Maori") and Harry Broadhurst, Tedder worked out the techniques that made the Desert Air Force, laying its famous "Tedder carpets" of bombs, such a devastatingly effective weapon from 1942 on.

The only rub was that, from 1942 on, Tedder had to work with Sir Bernard Montgomery. Like "Monty," Tedder had a logical mind. Here any resemblance ended. By early 1943, Tedder was referring sarcastically to Montgomery as "Napoleon." (Coningham, who had to work even more closely with Montgomery, disliked him correspondingly more.) By early 1943, however, Tedder was moving into a sphere several levels above Monty. He was about to become General Dwight D. Eisenhower's air commander.

Tedder had had mixed feelings about some of the Americans he had met in the war's early days. Pan American's Cairo officials, he felt, clearly had their eyes fixed more firmly on post-war air routes than on wartime needs. Some of the American military who passed through Cairo offered advice in inverse ratio to their combat experience. Tedder, however, was open-minded as well as logical. He learned to deal with his allies and understood that Britain, enmeshed in a coalition with a powerful partner, had to work successfully with that ally. This drew him to Eisenhower, who seemed to understand the art of coalition warfare better than anyone. The bulk of the air assets in the Mediterranean in early 1943 were British; Ike needed a British air commander—and Tedder was the preeminent British practitioner of the tactical uses of air power.

From the time of the Casablanca Conference in February 1943 until he accompanied Ike to London in January 1944 to become Allied deputy supreme commander, Tedder managed the complex air war in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. As one of his management tools, he acquired an operational research scientist for his staff in the form of Professor Solly Zuckerman, a zoologist by training who had made his name studying apes. Tedder was increasingly to draw upon Zuckerman's analytical skills for the rest of the war. The air operations that Tedder directed—and Zuckerman scrutinized—in the Mediterranean in 1943 would provide the experience and data crucial to shaping the famous pre-D-Day "Transportation Plan."

By the time the Allied campaign in Tunisia ended, Tedder had established himself as a senior British officer the Americans liked and trusted. He told his Anglo-American staff in Algiers that the attitude he wanted was "we," not "us and you." When the discussions began in June 1943 that led to the eventual setting up of Southeast Asia Command, American Army Chief of Staff George Marshall made it clear that if the British, as rumored, named as its head Air Chief Marshal Sholto Douglas, he would not allow a single American to serve under him. Tedder, however, would be completely acceptable. Eisenhower told Marshall in October 1943 (when Marshall himself was widely expected to be the designated commander for the invasion of Europe) that he would need as air commander someone thoroughly versed in air support for ground forces—and suggested Tedder. When Ike became supreme commander for the OVERLORD invasion of Normandy, Tedder was almost an automatic choice as his British deputy.

By January 1944, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was back in the England he had left as an unknown air vice marshal three years before. Now, however, as deputy supreme commander to Eisenhower, he was the highest ranking British officer in the SHAEF command structure. But what exactly did a deputy supreme commander do, beside representing his country at the top of the war's most important Allied command? Churchill apparently was not sure, remarking that Tedder's position seemed analogous to that of a "floating kidney." In fact, Tedder became coordinator of air operations for the supreme commander—controlling the largest combat air force ever assembled. (Perhaps fortunately, since the designated Allied air commander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory, had trouble dealing with both American and British senior officers.)

Armed with his own experiences and Zuckerman's analyses, Tedder argued the Transportation Plan—the blueprint for paralyzing German communications in France—through the two obstacles that threatened to stop it. Churchill feared that heavy French civilian casualties would prejudice postwar Anglo-French relations. The "bomber barons," British and American, who had hitherto fought their own war, disliked coming under SHAEF's control. Tedder's accomplishment is best measured by the crippled state of German rail traffic in France and Belgium on the eve of D-Day—a paralysis that isolated Normandy from quick German reinforce-

Together with British Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, commander of the invasion fleet at Normandy, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder (right) visits the beachhead shortly after the historic Allied landing.

ment and thus contributed mightily to the Allied success.

As later described by Churchill himself, the Allied air weapon was to be used in the three months approaching Normandy to create a "railway desert" behind the German troops manning the defenses of Normandy. The strategic plan was to destroy German rail links in France, in Belgium and in western Germany. Tactically, that meant a bombing campaign against rail depots, repair shops, rolling stock and related amenities in a spread of 93 rail centers on the various approaches to Normandy. The fearsome price to be paid, however, would be French casualties—civilians.

That realization led to a spate of discussion and communiques among the Allied principals—

Churchill to Eisenhower: "The Cabinet today took rather a grave and on the whole an adverse view of the proposal to bomb so many French railway centres, in view of the fact that scores of thousands of French civilians, men, women, and children, would lose their lives or be injured."

Eisenhower to Churchill: "The weight of the argument that has been brought against the bombing of transportation centres in occupied territories is heavy indeed. But I and my military advisers have become convinced that the bombing of these centres will increase our chances for success in the critical battle [Normandy]."

A month before the critical invasion planned for early June 1944, Churchill conveyed his apprehensions to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Churchill noted that he himself still felt the *Luftwaffe* should be the prime target of the Allied air effort, but that Eisenhower, Tedder and other key planners were convinced of the "efficacy of the 'railway plan'." Said Churchill to FDR: "It must be remembered, on the one hand, that this slaughter is among a friendly people who have committed no crimes against us, and not among the German foe, with all their record of cruelty and ruthlessness. On the other hand, we naturally feel the hazardous nature of Operation "Overlord" and are in deadly earnest about making it a success."

Roosevelt replied more or less in concert with Eisenhower's thought. "However regrettable the attendant loss of civilian lives is, I am not prepared to impose from this distance any restriction on military action by the responsible commanders that in their opinion might mitigate against the success of "Overlord" or cause additional loss of life to our Allied forces of invasion."

A corollary concern stated both by Churchill and FDR, along with their subordinates, was the possibility of adverse reaction by the French populous. In the end, as Churchill would note in his war memoir *Closing the Ring*, the number of French casualties was far less than the original projections of possibly 80,000 killed and injured. "The sealing off of the Normandy battlefield from reinforcement by rail," added Churchill with the advantage of hindsight, "may well have been the greatest direct contribution that the bomber forces could make to "Overlord." But, Churchill still noted, "The price was paid."

Tedder continued to coordinate air matters after D-Day—a job which brought him increasingly into conflict with Monty. Tedder's opinion of British military leadership had not improved with the passage of time—he was very critical of the pace of Montgomery's operations after D-Day. In fact Tedder would have been happy to see Monty removed as 21 Army Group commander. Monty, however, survived, and Tedder's relationships with him and his powerful patron, Sir Alan Brooke, the chief of the Imperial General Staff, were never thereafter anything but distant. (Long after Tedder's death, Monty's devoted biographer, Nigel Hamilton, would continue the quarrel.) There was even a move early in 1945, originating in London and probably with Brooke, to remove him as Ike's deputy. His replacement was to be Sir Harold Alexander from Italy. The idea was that "Alex," a charming man of moderate talent, but Churchill's favorite general, would take over the day-to-day management of the fighting. It was a scheme dear to Monty and Brooke, who both had as low an opinion of Eisenhower's generalship as Tedder had of the British Army.

But if Monty had powerful friends, so did Tedder. Ike knew that Tedder was a coalition stalwart (and that his deputy had consistently opposed Monty on a variety of issues). Tedder ended the war as deputy supreme commander. The stresses in the wartime coalition were by no means exclusively British vs. American.

Whatever the British Army thought of Tedder, there was no question about his stature in his own service. Shortly after the war's end, he succeeded his long-time supporter, Sir Charles Portal, as chief of the Air Staff. The young man who sailed away to a colonial career in 1914 retired in 1951 as Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder. He published his memoirs nearly 20 years later, just before his death in 1967. *With Prejudice* shows no sign that time and age had in any way softened his feeling about the British Army—or altered his views on Ike. Its virtual silence on personal matters (his son's death in combat early in the war is not mentioned; his first wife's in an air accident gets a sentence) does, however, reveal the self-contained character of this successful practitioner of both the tactical uses of air power and of coalition warfare.

As for the writing of World War II history—some of the British Army's more obscure generals have found biographers, and Tedder has not. □

Continued from page 15

21 feet long, 7½ feet in height and breadth. Designed to carry 13 men, a driver, a commander and ten infantry men, it had a gross weight of 10 tons. Standard armament was a Browning .30-caliber A4 machine gun mounted on either a tripod or pedestal truck mount. Later in the war, models were modified for a .50-caliber machine gun. The vehicle had a 147-horsepower, six-cylinder, four-stroke, White Model 160AX water-cooled engine, and its top speed was rated at 45 miles an hour. With a fuel consumption of approximately three miles per gallon and two self-sealing, 30-gallon tanks, it had a cruising range of 180-to-215 miles.

As with previous combat cars, the chassis was essentially that of a truck. Bolted to this framework was another body assembly consisting of 1/4-inch faced-hardened armored plates. One-half inch armored plates were used in the windshield and the two hinged sidedoors. There was a shatter-proof glass windshield that had to be removed prior to using the steel windshield. Vision slots were cut in both the sidedoors and steel windshield. The floor plates were either aluminum or steel. Located on the front bumper was a cylindrical, spring-loaded drum to prevent rooting and nosing down as well as to facilitate movement through heavy underbrush. Later on in the war, a winch was added. Four hinged and armored shutters controlled from the driver's compartment would protect the engine and radiator.

As with the earlier "half tracks," the two forward wheels were standard 8.25-20/12-ply combat rubber tires. The rear "tracks" had four bogie wheels, a double steel support roller at the top and an idler sprocket to the rear. The original models were designed to carry 10 infantrymen, five seated on benches located on each side of the carrier. Later modification of the carrier included a rear protected door. Modifications were also made to accommodate both 75mm and 105mm guns, as well as the 81mm and 4.2-inch mortars.

The M3 Half Track thus appeared to have given the combined-arms team advocates a critical element missing in World War I—a vehicle as mobile and protected as the tank to carry accompanying infantrymen. They now had the ability to apply massive firepower in flexible fashion with some assurance of survival.

To do so, Army planners in 1942 assigned half tracks to the armored infantry battalions of the newly created armored divisions, in essence one half track per rifle squad. When the American armored divisions first saw combat in North Africa in 1942, there were 53 half tracks in each battalion. The initial ratio of armor battalions to infantry battalions in these armored divisions was 2:1, but Tunisia proved the ratio to be too heavy. For the Italian and later European campaigns, armored divisions were organized along a 1:1 line. All infantry battalions assigned to armored divisions were equipped with the half tracks. Thus, the adjustment of ratios increased the number of M3 vehicles in the divisions. By the end of the war, each armored infantry battalion was authorized 78 M3 half tracks.

Half tracks were used during the Battle of the Bulge; here the 3rd Armored and 83rd Infantry Division's push through Lieneux.

The half track was truly a hybrid vehicle, somewhere between a tank and a truck. On the home front, it proved remarkably easy to produce—more than 41,000 were built during the war.

Because armored advocates had lacked infantry vehicles during the interwar period, doctrinal development for their use had been solely theoretical, with no field testing. Thus the half track was seen solely as a vehicle enabling the infantry to keep up with the tanks. What might be done because of this was never tested. Infantrymen in half track had become nothing more than a tank-support weapon. Then, in the reality of war, the vehicle did not provide the promised combined-arms solution. Not a success in combat, it saw its production halted in early 1944, a year before the war ended.

There are several basic reasons for this lack of success. First, the vehicle was supposed to give infantry equal mobility with tanks. But, as a half track, the vehicle gave only half that mobility. While on roads, it was capable of keeping up with tanks. But when the tanks left the road, the half tracks were left in their dust. By the fast-moving months at the end of the war in Europe, the American doughboys also left their half tracks and rode on tanks. Thus half tracks became cargo carriers bringing up the rear.

Secondly, the vehicle was supposed to give infantry protection equal to that of a tank. Again, as a half track, it only gave half that protection. Its side armor plating provided protection from small-arms fire. However, it lacked any overhead protection. Thus, while tanks might move forward under friendly proximity-fuse (VT) artillery fire, a tactic favored by the Americans, half tracks could not. The tanks were left by themselves, the same condition that had proved so risky for them in World War I.

Thirdly, the vehicle was built while doctrine was still in its infancy. American commanders simply had not thought through how to employ the combined-arms team, although there were some like Patton who did so with success

Thus, with the end of World War II, the half track became a relic of military history, an artifact most likely to be found today in front of a museum or perhaps lovingly restored by a World War II buff. (It still shows up in the inventory of some third-world countries.) The post-war U.S. Army quickly addressed the problem with half tracks by adopting a full-tracked infantry carrier—the M39, M44, M75, M59, M113, and M2 IFV and the M3 ACV (the Bradley Fighting Vehicle). Significantly, all these vehicles had overhead protection from indirect artillery fire. Likewise, as seen in the Arab-Israeli wars as well as in the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the doctrine of combined arms has became more sophisticated.

The World War II half track thus was a critical step in the evolution of combined-arms technology on the battlefield. While gone, it should not be forgotten. □

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